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Through the Victory Book Campaign
(A. L. A. — A. R. C. — U. S. O.)
To the Armed Forces and Merchant Marine

TOM COFFIN ON THE WRECK OF THE ARIEL.—*The Pilot.*

WORKS

PUBLISHER.
1892.

B
KG 353 (3B)

THE PILOT.

"List! ye Landsmen, all to me."

TO WILLIAM BRANFORD SHUBRICK, Esq., U.S.N.

My Dear Shubrick:

Each year brings some new and melancholy chasm in what is now the brief list of my naval friends and former associates. War, disease, and the casualties of a hazardous profession, have made fearful inroads in the limited number; while the places of the dead are supplied by names that to me are those of strangers. With the consequences of these sad changes before me, I cherish the recollection of those with whom I once lived in close familiarity with peculiar interest, and feel a triumph in their growing reputations that is but little short of their own honest pride.

But neither time nor separation has shaken our intimacy; and I know that in dedicating to you this volume, I tell you nothing new, when I add that it is a tribute paid to an enduring friendship, by

Your old Messmate,
The Author.

PREFACE.

It is probable a true history of human events would show that a far larger proportion of our acts are the result of sudden impulses and accident than of that reason of which we so much boast. However true or false this opinion may be in more important matters, it is certainly and strictly correct as relates to the conception and execution of this book.

"The Pilot" was published in 1823. This was not long after the appearance of "The Pirate," a work which, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, has a direct connection with the sea. In conversation with a friend, a man of polished taste and extensive reading, the authorship of the Scottish novels came under discussion. The claims of Sir Walter were a little distrusted, on account of the peculiar and minute information that the romances were then very generally thought to display. "The Pirate" was cited as a very marked instance of this universal knowledge, and it was wondered where a man of Scott's habits and associations could have become so familiar with the sea.

The writer has frequently observed that there was much looseness in this universal knowledge, and that the secret of its success was to be traced to the power of creating that *vrai-semblance*, which is so remarkably exhibited in these world-renowned fictions, rather than to any very accurate information on the part of their author. It would have been hypercritical to object to "The Pirate" that it was not strictly nautical or true in its details; but, when the reverse was urged as a proof of what, considering the character of other portions of the work, would have been most extraordinary attainments, it was a sort of provocation to dispute the seamanship of "The Pirate," a quality to which the book has certainly very little just pretension. The result of this conversation was a sudden determination to produce a work which, if it had no other merit, might present truer pictures of the ocean and ships than any that are to be found in

"The Pirate." To this unpremeditated decision, purely an impulse, is not only "The Pilot" due, but a tolerably numerous school of nautical romances that have succeeded it.

The author had many misgivings concerning the success of the undertaking, after he had made some progress in the work, the opinions of his different friends being anything but encouraging. One would declare that the sea could not be made interesting; that it was tame, monotonous, and without any other movement than unpleasant storms, and that, for his part, the less he got of it the better. The women very generally protested that such a book would have the odor of bilge-water, and that it would give them the *maladie de mer*. Not a single individual among all those who discussed the merits of the project, within the range of the author's knowledge, either spoke, or looked, encouragingly. It is probable that all these persons anticipated a signal failure.

So very discouraging did these ominous opinions get to be, that the writer was, once or twice, tempted to throw his manuscript aside and turn to something new. A favorable opinion, however, coming from a very unexpected quarter, put a new face on the matter, and raised new hopes. Among the intimate friends of the writer was an Englishman who possessed most of the peculiar qualities of the educated of his country. He was learned even, had a taste that was so just as always to command respect, but was prejudiced, and particularly so in all that related to this country and its literature. He could never be persuaded to admire Bryant's "Water-Fowl," and this mainly because if it were accepted as good poetry it must be placed at once among the finest fugitive pieces of the language. Of the "Thanatopsis" he thought better, though inclined to suspect it of plagiarism. To the tender mercies of this one-sided critic, who had never affected to compliment the previous works of the author, the sheets of a volume of "The Pilot" were committed, with scarce an expectation of his liking them. The reverse proved to be the case —he expressed himself highly gratified, and predicted a success for the book which it probably never attained.

Thus encouraged, one more experiment was made, a seaman being selected for the critic. A kinsman, a namesake, and an old messmate of the author, one now in command on a foreign station, was chosen, and a considerable portion of the first volume was read to him. There is no wish to conceal the satisfaction with which the effect on this listener was observed. He treated the whole matter as fact, and his criticisms were strictly professional and perfectly just. But the interest he betrayed could not be mistaken. It gave a perfect and most gratifying assurance that the work would be more likely to find favor with nautical men than with any other class of readers.

"The Pilot" could scarcely be a favorite with females. The story has little interest for them, nor was it much heeded by the author of the book in the progress of his labors. His aim was to illustrate vessels and the ocean, rather than to draw any pictures of sentiment and love. In this last respect the book has small claims on the reader's attention, though it is hoped that the story has sufficient interest to relieve the more strictly nautical features of the work.

It would be affectation to deny that "The Pilot" met with a most unlooked-for success. The novelty of the design probably contributed a large share of this result. Sea-tales came into vogue as a consequence; and, as every practical part of knowledge has its uses, something has been gained by letting the landsman into the secrets of the seaman's manner of life. Perhaps, in some small degree, an interest has been awakened in behalf of a very numerous, and what has hitherto been a sort of proscribed class of men, that may directly tend to a melioration of their condition.

It is not easy to make the public comprehend all the necessities of a service afloat. With several hundred rude beings confined within the narrow limits of a vessel, men of all nations and of the lowest habits, it would be to the last degree indiscreet to commence their reformation

by relaxing the bonds of discipline, under the mistaken impulses of a false philanthropy. It has a lofty sound, to be sure, to talk about American citizens being too good to be brought under the lash upon the high seas; but he must have a very mistaken notion who does not see that tens of thousands of these pretending persons on shore, even, would be greatly benefited by a little judicious flogging. It is the judgment in administering, and not the mode of punishment, that requires to be looked into; and in this respect there has certainly been a great improvement of late years. It is seldom, indeed, that any institution, practice or system is improved by the blind interference of those who know nothing about it. Better would it be to trust to the experience of those who have long governed turbulent men, than to the impulsive experiments of those who rarely regard more than one side of a question, and that the most showy and glittering, having, quite half of the time, some selfish personal end to answer.

There is an uneasy desire among a vast many well-disposed persons to get the fruits of the Christian Faith without troubling themselves about the Faith itself. This is done under the sanction of Peace Societies, Temperance and Moral Reform Societies, in which the end is too often mistaken for the means. When the Almighty sent His Son on earth it was to point out the way in which all this was to be brought about by means of the Church; but men have so frittered away that body of divine organization, through their divisions and subdivisions, all arising from human conceit, that it is no longer regarded as the agency it was so obviously intended to be, and various contrivances are to be employed as substitutes for that which proceeded directly from the Son of God.

Among the efforts of the day, however, there is one connected with the moral improvement of the sailor that commands our profound respect. Cut off from most of the charities of life for so large a portion of his time, deprived altogether of association with the gentler and better portions of the other sex, and living a man in a degree proscribed amid the many signs of advancement that distinguish the age, it was time that he should be remembered and singled out, and become the subject of combined and Christian philanthropy. There is much reason to believe that the effort, now making in the right direction and under proper auspices, will be successful, and that it will cause the lash to be laid aside in the best and most rational manner—by rendering its use unnecessary.

COOPERSTOWN, August 10, 1849.

CHAPTER I.

"Sullen waves, incessant rolling,
Rudely dashed against her sides."—*Song.*

A SINGLE glance at the map will make the reader acquainted with the position of the eastern coast of the Island of Great Britain, as connected with the shores of the opposite continent. Together they form the boundaries of the small sea that has for ages been known to the world as the scene of maritime exploits, and as the great avenue through which commerce and war have conducted the fleets of the northern nations of Europe. Over this sea the islanders long asserted a jurisdiction exceeding that which reason concedes to any power on the highway of nations, and which frequently led to conflicts that caused an expenditure of blood and treasure utterly disproportioned to the advantages that can ever arise from the maintenance of a useless and abstract right. It is across the waters of this disputed ocean that we shall attempt to conduct our readers, selecting a period for our incidents that has a peculiar interest for every American, not only because it was the birthday of his nation, but because it was also the era when reason and common-sense began to take the place of custom and feudal practices in the management of the affairs of nations.

Soon after the events of the Revolution had involved the kingdoms of France and Spain, and the republic of Holland, in our quarrel, a group of laborers was collected in a field that lay exposed to the winds of

the ocean, on the northeastern coast of England. These men were lightening their toil, and cheering the gloom of a day in December, by uttering their crude opinions on the political aspects of the times. The fact that England was engaged in a war with some of her dependencies on the other side of the Atlantic had long been known to them, after the manner that faint rumors of distant and uninteresting events gain on the ear; but now that nations, with whom she had been used to battle, were armed against her in the quarrel, the din of war had disturbed the quiet even of these secluded and illiterate rustics. The principal speakers on the occasion were a Scotch drover, who was waiting the leisure of the occupant of the fields, and an Irish laborer, who had found his way across the Channel, and thus far over the island, in quest of employment.

"The nagurs wouldn't have been a job at all for ould England, letting alone Ireland," said the latter, "if these French and Spanishers hadn't been troubling themselves in the matter. I'm sure it's but little reason I have for thanking them, if a man is to kape as sober as a praist at mass, for fear he should find himself a sholdier, and he knowing nothing about the same."

"Hoot! mon! ye ken but little of raising an airmy in Ireland, if ye mak' a drum o' a whisky-keg," said the drover, winking to the listeners. "Noo, in the north, they ca' a gathering of the folk, and follow the pipes as graciously as ye wad journey kirkward o' a sabbath morn. I've seen a' the names o' a Heeland raj'ment on a sma' bit paper that ye might cover wi' a leddy's hand. They war' a' Camerons and McDonalds, though they paraded sax hundred men! But what ha' ye gotten here? That chield has an ow'r liking to the land for a seafaring body; an' if the bottom o' the sea be onything like the top o't, he's in gr'at danger o' a ship-wreck!"

This unexpected change in the discourse drew all eyes on the object toward which the staff of the observant drover was pointed. To the utter amazement of every individual present, a small vessel was seen moving slowly round a point of land that formed one of the sides of the little bay to which the field the laborers were in composed the other. There was something very peculiar in the externals of this unusual visitor, which added in no small degree to the surprise created by her appearance in that retired place. None but the smallest vessels, and those rarely, or at long intervals a desperate smuggler, were ever known to venture so close to the land, amid the sand-bars and sunken rocks with which that immediate coast abounded. The adventurous mariners who now attempted this dangerous navigation in so wanton and, apparently, so heedless a manner, were in a low, black schooner, whose hull seemed utterly disproportioned to the raking masts it upheld, which, in their turn, supported a lighter set of spars that tapered away until their upper extremities appeared no larger than the lazy pennant that in vain endeavored to display its length in the light breeze.

The short day of that high northern latitude was already drawing to a close, and the sun was throwing his parting rays obliquely across the waters, touching the gloomy waves here and there with streaks of pale light. The stormy winds of the German Ocean were apparently lulled to rest; and, though the incessant rolling of the surge on the shore heightened the gloomy character of the hour and the view, the light ripple that ruffled the sleeping billows was produced by a gentle air, that blew directly from the land. Notwithstanding this favorable circumstance, there was something threatening in the aspect of the ocean, which was speaking in hollow but deep murmurs, like a volcano on the eve of an eruption, that greatly heightened the feelings of amazement and dread with which the peasants beheld this extraordinary interruption to the quiet of their little bay. With no other sails spread to the action of the air than her heavy mainsail and one of those light jibs that projected far beyond her bows, the vessel glided over the water with a grace and facility that seemed magical to the beholders,

who turned their wondering looks from the schooner to each other in silent amazement. At length the drover spoke in a low, solemn voice:

"He's a bold chield that steers her! and if that bit craft has wood in her bottom, like the brigantines that ply between Lon'on and the Frith at Leith, he's in mair danger than a prudent man could wish. Ay! he's by the big rock that shows his head when the tide runs low, but it's no mortal mon who can steer long in the road he's journeying and not speedily find land wi' water a top o't."

The little schooner, however, still held her way among the rocks and sandpits, making such slight deviations in her course as proved her to be under the direction of one who knew his danger, until she had entered as far into the bay as prudence could at all justify, when her canvas was gathered into folds, seemingly without the agency of hands, and the vessel, after rolling for a few minutes on the long billows that hove in from the ocean, swung round in the currents of the tide, and was held by her anchor.

The peasants now began to make their conjectures more freely concerning the character and object of their visitor; some intimating that she was engaged in contraband trade, and others that her views were hostile and her business war. A few dark hints were hazarded on the materiality of her construction, for nothing of artificial formation, it was urged, would be ventured by men in such a dangerous place, at a time when even the most inexperienced landsman was enabled to foretell the certain gale. The Scotchman, who, to all the sagacity of his countrymen, added no small proportion of their superstition, leaned greatly to the latter conclusion, and had begun to express this sentiment, warily and with reverence, when the child of Erin, who appeared not to possess any very definite ideas on the subject, interrupted him, by exclaiming:

"Faith! there's two of them! a big and a little! sure the bogles of the saa likes good company the same as any other Christians!"

"Twa!" echoed the drover; "twa! ill luck bides o' some o' ye. Twa craft a sailing without hand to guide them, in sic a place as this, whar' eyesight is na guid enough to show the dangers, bodes evil to a' that luik thereon. Hoot! she's na yearling the tither! Luik, mon! luik! she's a gallant boat, and a gr'at;" he paused, raised his pack from the ground, and first giving one searching look at the objects of his suspicion, he nodded with great sagacity to the listeners, and continued, as he moved slowly toward the interior of the country, "I should na wonder if she carried King George's commission aboot her; weel, weel, I wull journey upward to the town, and ha' a crack wi' the good mon; for they craft have a suspeecious aspect, and the sma' bit thing wu'ld nab a mon quite easy, and the big ane wu'ld hold us a' and no feel we war' in her."

This sagacious warning caused a general movement in the party, for the intelligence of a hot press was among the rumors of the times. The husbandmen collected their implements of labor, and retired homeward; and, though many a curious eye was bent on the movements of the vessels from the distant hills, but very few of those not immediately interested in the mysterious visitors ventured to approach the little rocky cliffs that lined the bay.

The vessel that occasioned these cautious movements was a gallant ship, whose huge hull, lofty masts, and square yards loomed in the evening's haze, above the sea, like a distant mountain rising from the deep. She carried but little sail, and though she warily avoided the near approach to the land that the schooner had attempted, the similarity of their movements was sufficiently apparent to warrant the conjecture that they were employed on the same duty. The frigate, for the ship belonged to this class of vessels, floated across the entrance of the little bay majestically in the tide, with barely enough motion through the water to govern her movements, until she had arrived opposite to the place where her consort lay, when she hove

up heavily into the wind, squared the enormous yards on her mainmast, and attempted, in counteracting the power of her sails by each other, to remain stationary; but the light air that had at no time swelled her heavy canvas to the utmost began to fail, and the long waves that rolled in from the ocean ceased to be ruffled with the breeze from the land. The currents and the billows were fast sweeping the frigate toward one of the points of the estuary, where the black heads of the rocks could be seen running far into the sea, and, in their turn, the mariners of the ship dropped an anchor to the bottom, and drew her sails in festoons to the yards. As the vessel swung round to the tide, a heavy ensign was raised to her peak, and, a current of air opening for a moment its folds, the white fields and red cross, that distinguish the flag of England, were displayed to view. So much even the wary drover had loitered at a distance to behold; but when a boat was launched from either vessel, he quickened his steps, observing to his wondering and amused companions that "they craft were a'thegither mair bonny to luik on than to abide wi'."

A numerous crew manned the barge that was lowered from the frigate, which, after receiving an officer, with an attendant youth, left the ship, and moved with a measured stroke of its oars directly toward the head of the bay. As it passed at a short distance from the schooner a light whaleboat, pulled by four athletic men, shot from her side, and, rather dancing over than cutting through the waves, crossed her course with a wonderful velocity. As the boats approached each other the men, in obedience to signals from their officers, suspended their efforts, and for a few minutes they floated at rest, during which time there was the following dialogue:

"Is the old man mad?" exclaimed the young officer in the whale-boat, when his men had ceased rowing; "does he think that the bottom of the *Ariel* is made of iron, and that a rock can't knock a hole in it! or does he think that she is manned with alligators, who can't be drowned?"

A languid smile played for a moment round the handsome features of the young man, who was rather reclining than sitting in the stern sheets of the barge, as he replied:

"He knows your prudence too well, Captain Barnstable, to fear either the wreck of your vessel or the drowning of her crew. How near the bottom does your keel lie?"

"I am afraid to sound," returned Barnstable. "I have never the heart to touch a lead-line when I see the rocks coming up to breathe like so many porpoises."

"You are afloat!" exclaimed the other, with a vehemence that denoted an abundance of latent fire.

"Afloat!" echoed his friend; "ay! the little *Ariel* would float in air!" As he spoke he rose in the boat, and, lifting his leathern sea-cap from his head, stroked back the thick clusters of black locks which shadowed his sunburnt countenance, while he viewed his little vessel with the complacency of a seaman who was proud of her qualities. "But it's close work, Mr. Griffith, when a man rides to a single anchor in a place like this, and at such a nightfall. What are the orders?"

"I shall put into the surf and let go a grapnel; you will take Mr. Merry into your whale-boat and try to drive her through the breakers on the beach."

"Beach!" retorted Barnstable; "do you call a perpendicular rock of a hundred feet in height a beach?"

"We shall not dispute about terms," said Griffith, smiling, "but you must manage to get on the shore; we have seen the signal from the land, and know that the pilot, whom we have so long expected, is ready to come off."

Barnstable shook his head with a grave air, as he muttered to himself, "This is droll navigation; first we run into an unfrequented bay that is full of rocks and sandpits and shoals, and then we get off our pilot. But how am I to know him?"

"Merry will give you the pass-word, and tell you where to look for him. I would land myself, but my orders forbid it. If you meet with difficulties, show three oar-blades in a row, and I will pull

in to your assistance. Three oars on end and a pistol will bring the fire of my muskets, and the signal repeated from the barge will draw a shot from the ship."

"I thank you, I thank you," said Barnstable, carelessly; "I believe I can fight my own battles against all the enemies we are likely to fall in with on this coast. But the old man is surely mad. I would——"

"You would obey his orders if he were here, and you will now please to obey mine," said Griffith, in a tone that the friendly expression of his eye contradicted. "Pull in and keep a lookout for a small man in a drab pea-jacket; Merry will give you the word; if he answer it, bring him off to the barge."

The young men now nodded familiarly and kindly to each other, and the boy who was called Mr. Merry having changed his place from the barge to the whale-boat, Barnstable threw himself into his seat, and, making a signal with his hand, his men again bent to their oars. The light vessel shot away from her companion, and dashed in boldly toward the rocks; after skirting the shore for some distance in quest of a favorable place, she was suddenly turned, and dashing over the broken waves, was run upon a spot where a landing could be effected in safety.

In the meantime the barge followed these movements, at some distance, with a more measured progress, and when the whale-boat was observed to be drawn up along-side of a rock, the promised grapnel was cast into the water, and her crew deliberately proceeded to get their fire-arms in a state for immediate service. Everything appeared to be done in obedience to strict orders that must have been previously communicated; for the young man, who has been introduced to the reader by the name of Griffith, seldom spoke, and then only in the pithy expressions that are apt to fall from those who are sure of obedience. When the boat had brought up to her grapnel, he sank back at his length on the cushioned seats of the barge, and, drawing his hat over his eyes in a listless manner, he continued for many minutes apparently absorbed in thoughts altogether foreign to his present situation. Occasionally he rose, and would first bend his looks in quest of his companions on the shore, and, then turning his expressive eyes toward the ocean, the abstracted and vacant air that so often usurped the place of animation and intelligence in his countenance would give place to the anxious and intelligent look of a seaman gifted with an experience beyond his years. His weather-beaten and hardy crew, having made their dispositions for offense, sat in profound silence, with their hands thrust into the bosoms of their jackets, but with their eyes earnestly regarding every cloud that was gathering in the threatening atmosphere, and exchanging looks of deep care, whenever the boat rose higher than usual on one of those long, heavy ground-swells that were heaving in from the ocean with increasing rapidity and magnitude.

CHAPTER II.

——"A horseman's coat shall hide
Thy taper shape and comeliness of side;
And with a bolder stride and looser air,
Mingled with men, a man thou must appear."
—PRIOR.

WHEN the whale-boat obtained the position we have described, the young lieutenant, who, in consequence of commanding a schooner, was usually addressed by the title of captain, stepped on the rocks, followed by the youthful midshipman, who had quitted the barge to aid in the hazardous duty of their expedition.

"This is, at best, but a Jacob's ladder we have to climb," said Barnstable, casting his eyes upward at the difficult ascent, "and it's by no means certain that we shall be well received, when we get up, though we should reach the top."

"We are under the guns of the frigate," returned the boy; "and you remember, sir, three oar-blades and a pistol, repeated from the barge, will draw her fire."

"Yes, on our own heads. Boy, never be so foolish as to trust a long shot. It makes a great smoke and some noise, but

it's a terrible uncertain manner of throwing old iron about. In such a business as this, I would sooner trust Tom Coffin and his harpoon to back me than the best broadside that ever rattled out of the three decks of a ninety-gun ship. Come, gather your limbs together, and try if you can walk on *terra firma*, Master Coffin."

The seaman who was addressed by this dire appellation arose slowly from the place where he was stationed as cockswain of the boat, and seemed to ascend high in the air by the gradual evolution of numberless folds in his body. When erect, he stood nearly six feet and as many inches in his shoes, though, when elevated in his most perpendicular attitude, there was a forward inclination about his head and shoulders that appeared to be the consequence of habitual confinement in limited lodgings. His whole frame was destitute of the rounded outlines of a well-formed man, though his enormous hands furnished a display of bones and sinews which gave indication of gigantic strength. On his head he wore a little, low, brown hat of wool, with an arched top, that threw an expression of solemnity and hardness over his harsh visage, the sharp prominent features of which were completely encircled by a set of black whiskers .that began to be frizzled a little with age. One of his hands grasped, with a sort of instinct, the staff of a bright harpoon, the lower end of which he placed firmly on the rock, as, in obedience to the order of his commander, he left the place where, considering his vast dimensions, he had been established in an incredibly small space.

As soon as Captain Barnstable received this addition to his strength, he gave a few precautionary orders to the men in the boat, and proceeded to the difficult task of ascending the rocks. Notwithstanding the great daring and personal agility of Barnstable, he would have been completely baffled in this attempt but for the assistance he occasionally received from his cockswain, whose prodigious strength and great length of limbs enabled him to make exertions which it would have been useless for most men to attempt. When within a few feet of the summit, they availed themselves of a projecting rock to pause for consultation and breath, both of which seemed necessary for their further movements.

"This will be but a bad place for a retreat, if we should happen to fall in with enemies," said Barnstable. "Where are we to look for this pilot, Mr. Merry, or how are we to know him? and what certainty have you that he will not betray us?"

"The question you are to put to him is written on this bit of paper," returned the boy, as he handed the other the word of recognition; "we made the signal on the point of the rock at yon headland, but, as he must have seen our boat, he will follow us to this place. As to his betraying us, he seems to have the confidence of Captain Munson, who has kept a bright lookout for him ever since we made the land."

"Ay," muttered the lieutenant, "and I shall have a bright lookout kept on him now we are *on* the land. I like not this business of hugging the shore so closely, nor have I much faith in any traitor. What think you of it, Master Coffin?"

The hardy old seaman, thus addressed, turned his grave visage on his commander and replied with a becoming gravity:

"Give me plenty of sea-room and good canvas, where there is no occasion for pilots at all, sir. For my part, I was born on board a chebacco-man, and never could see the use of more land than now and then a small island to raise a few vegetables, and to dry your fish. I'm sure the sight of it always makes me feel uncomfortable, unless we have the wind dead off-shore."

"Ah! Tom, you are a sensible fellow," said Barnstable, with an air half comic, half serious. "But we must be moving. The sun is just touching those clouds to seaward, and God keep us from riding out this night at anchor in such a place as this!"

Laying his hand on a projection of the rock above him, Barnstable swung himself forward, and, following this movement with a desperate leap or two, he stood at

once on the brow of the cliff. His cockswain very deliberately raised the midshipman after his officer, and, proceeding with more caution, but less exertion, he soon placed himself by his side.

When they reached the level land that lay above the cliffs, and began to inquire, with curious and wary eyes, into the surrounding scenery, the adventurers discovered a cultivated country, divided in the usual manner by hedges and walls. Only one habitation for man, however, and that a small dilapidated cottage, stood within a mile of them, most of the dwellings being placed, as far as convenience would permit, from the fogs and damps of the ocean.

"Here seems to be neither anything to apprehend, nor the object of our search," said Barnstable, when he had taken the whole view in his survey; "I fear we have landed to no purpose, Mr. Merry. What say, Long Tom; see you what we want?"

"I see no pilot, sir," returned the cockswain; "but it's an ill wind that blows luck to nobody; there is a mouthful of fresh meat stowed away under that row of bushes, that would make a double ration to all hands in the *Ariel*."

The midshipman laughed, as he pointed out to Barnstable the object of the cockswain's solicitude, which proved to be a fat ox, quietly ruminating under a hedge near them.

"There's many a hungry fellow aboard of us," said the boy, merrily, "who would be glad to second Long Tom's motion, if the time and business would permit us to slay the animal."

"It is but a lubber's blow, Mr. Merry," returned the cockswain, without a muscle of his hard face yielding, as he struck the end of his harpoon violently against the earth, and then made a motion toward poising the weapon; "let Captain Barnstable but say the word, and I'll drive the iron through him to the quick; I've sent it to the seizing in many a whale, that hadn't a jacket of such blubber as that fellow wears."

"Pshaw! you are not on a whaling voyage, where everything that offers is game," said Barnstable, turning himself pettishly away from the beast, as if he distrusted his own forbearance; "but stand fast! I see some one approaching behind the hedge. Look to your arms, Mr. Merry—the first thing we hear may be a shot."

"Not from that cruiser," cried the thoughtless lad; "he is a younker, like myself, and would hardly dare run down upon such a formidable force as we muster."

"You say true, boy," returned Barnstable, relinquishing the grasp he held on his pistol. "He comes on with caution, as if afraid. He is small, and is in drab, though I should hardly call it a pea-jacket—and yet he may be our man. Stand you both here, while I go and hail him."

As Barnstable walked rapidly toward the hedge, that in part concealed the stranger, the latter stopped suddenly, and seemed to be in doubt whether to advance or to retreat. Before he had decided on either, the active sailor was within a few feet of him.

"Pray, sir," said Barnstable, "what water have we in this bay?"

The slight form of the stranger started with an extraordinary emotion at this question, and he shrunk aside involuntarily, as if to conceal his features, before he answered, in a voice that was barely audible:

"I should think it would be the water of the German Ocean."

"Indeed! you must have passed no small part of your short life in the study of geography, to be so well informed," returned the lieutenant; "perhaps, sir, your cunning is also equal to telling me how long we shall sojourn together, if I make you a prisoner, in order to enjoy the benefit of your wit?"

To this alarming intimation, the youth who was addressed made no reply; but as he averted his face and concealed it with both hands, the offended seaman, believing that a salutary impression had been made upon the fears of his auditor, was about to proceed with his interrogatories. The singular agitation of the stranger's frame, however, caused the lieutenant to continue silent a few mo-

ments longer, when, to his utter amazement, he discovered that what he had mistaken for alarm was produced by an endeavor, on the part of the youth, to suppress a violent fit of laughter.

"Now, by all the whales in the sea!" cried Barnstable, "but you are merry out of season, young gentleman. It's quite bad enough to be ordered to anchor in such a bay as this with a storm brewing before my eyes, without landing to be laughed at by a stripling who has not strength to carry a beard if he had one, when I ought to be getting an offing for the safety of both body and soul. But I'll know more of you and your jokes, if I take you into my own mess, and am giggled out of my sleep for the rest of the cruise."

As the commander of the schooner concluded, he approached the stranger with an air of offering some violence, but the other shrank back from his extended arm, and exclaimed, with a voice in which real terror had gotten the better of mirth:

"Barnstable! dear Barnstable! would you harm me?"

The sailor recoiled several feet at this unexpected appeal, and, rubbing his eyes, he threw the cap from his head before he cried:

"What do I hear! and what do I see! There lies the *Ariel*—and yonder is the frigate. Can this be Katherine Plowden?"

His doubts, if any doubts remained, were soon removed, for the stranger sank on the bank at her side, in an attitude in which female bashfulness was beautifully contrasted with her attire, and gave vent to her mirth in an uncontrollable burst of merriment.

From that moment, all thoughts of his duty, and the pilot, or even of the *Ariel*, appeared to be banished from the mind of the seaman, who sprang to her side, and joined in her mirth, though he hardly knew why or wherefore.

When the diverted girl had in some degree recovered her composure, she turned to her companion, who had sat good-naturedly by her side, content to be laughed at, and said:

"But this is not only silly but cruel to others. I owe you an explanation of my unexpected appearance, and perhaps, also, of my extraordinary attire."

"I can anticipate everything," cried Barnstable; "you heard that we were on the coast, and have flown to redeem the promise you made in America. But I ask no more; the chaplain of the frigate—"

"May preach as usual, and to as little purpose," interrupted the disguised female; "but no nuptial benediction shall be pronounced over me until I have effected the object of this hazardous experiment. You are not usually selfish, Barnstable; would you have me forgetful of the happiness of others?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"My poor, my devoted cousin. I heard that two vessels answering the description of the frigate and the *Ariel* were seen hovering on the coast, and I determined at once to have a communication with you. I have followed your movements for a week in this dress, but have been unsuccessful till now. To-day I observed you to approach nearer to the shore than usual, and happily, by being adventurous, I have been successful."

"Ay, God knows we are near enough to the land! But does Captain Munson know of your wish to get on board his ship?"

"Certainly not—none know of it but yourself. I thought that if Griffith and you could learn our situation you might be tempted to hazard a little to redeem us from our thraldom. In this paper I have prepared such an account as will, I trust, excite all your chivalry, and by which you may govern your movements."

"Our movements?" interrupted Barnstable. "You will pilot us in person."

"Then there's two of them!" said a hoarse voice near them.

The alarmed female shrieked as she recovered her feet, but she still adhered, with instinctive dependence, to the side of her lover. Barnstable, who recognized the tones of his cockswain, bent an angry brow on the sober visage that was peering at them above the hedge, and demanded the meaning of the interruption.

"Seeing you were hull-down, sir, and

not knowing but the chase might lead you ashore, Mr. Merry thought it best to have a lookout kept. I told him that you were overhauling the mail-bags of the messenger for the news, but as he was an officer, sir, and I nothing but a common hand, I did as he ordered."

"Return, sir, where I commanded you to remain," said Barnstable; "and desire Mr. Merry to wait my pleasure."

The cockswain gave the usual reply of an obedient seaman; but, before he left the hedge, he stretched out one of his brawny arms toward the ocean, and said, in tones of solemnity suited to his apprehensions and character:

"I showed you how to knot a reef-point, and pass a gasket, Captain Barnstable, nor do I believe you could even take two half-hitches when you first came aboard of the *Spalmacitty*. These be things that a man is soon expart in, but it takes the time of his nat'ral life to larn to know the weather. There be streaked wind-galls in the offing that speak as plainly, to all that see them, and know God's language in the clouds, as ever you spoke through a trumpet, to shorten sail; besides, sir, don't you hear the sea moaning as if it knew the hour was at hand when it was to wake up from its sleep?"

"Ay, Tom," returned the officer, walking to the edge of the cliffs, and throwing a seaman's glance at the gloomy ocean "'tis a threatening night indeed; but this pilot must be had—and——"

"Is that the man?" interrupted the cockswain, pointing toward a man who was standing not far from them, an attentive observer of their proceedings, at the same time that he was narrowly watched himself by the young midshipman. "God send that he knows his trade well, for the bottom of a ship will need eyes to find its road out of this wild anchorage!"

"That must indeed be the man!" exclaimed Barnstable, at once recalled to his duty. He then held a short dialogue with his female companion, whom he left concealed by the hedge, and proceeded to address the stranger. When near enough to be heard, the commander of the schooner demanded:

"What water have you in this bay?"

The stranger, who seemed to expect this question, answered without the least hesitation:

"Enough to take all out in safety, who have entered with confidence."

"You are the man I seek," cried Barnstable; "are you ready to go off?"

"Both ready and willing," returned the pilot, "and there is need of haste. I would give the best hundred guineas that ever were coined for two hours more use of that sun which has left us, or for even half the time of this fading twilight."

"Think you our situation so bad?" said the lieutenant. "Follow this gentleman to the boat, then; I will join you by the time you can descend the cliffs. I believe I can prevail on another hand to go with us."

"Time is more precious now than any number of hands," said the pilot, throwing a glance of impatience from under his lowering brows, "and the consequences of delay must be visited on those who occasion it."

"And, sir, I will meet the consequences with those who have a right to inquire into my conduct," said Barnstable, haughtily.

With this warning and retort they separated; the young officer retracing his steps impatiently toward his mistress, muttering his indignation in suppressed execrations, and the pilot drawing the leather belt of his pea-jacket mechanically around his body, as he followed the midshipman and cockswain to their boat in moody silence.

Barnstable found the disguised female, who had announced herself as Katherine Plowden, awaiting his return with intense anxiety depicted on every feature of her intelligent countenance. As he felt the responsibility of his situation, notwithstanding his cool reply to the pilot, the young man hastily drew an arm of the apparent boy, forgetful of her disguise, through his own, and led her forward.

"Come, Katherine," he said, "the time urges to be prompt."

"What pressing necessity is there for immediate departure?" she inquired,

checking his movements by withdrawing herself from his side.

"You heard the ominous prognostic of my cockswain on the weather, and I am forced to add my own testimony to his opinion. 'Tis a crazy night that threatens us, though I cannot repent of coming into the bay, since it has led to this interview."

"God forbid that we should either of us have cause to repent of it!" said Katherine, the paleness of anxiety chasing away the rich bloom that had mantled the animated face of the brunette. "But you have the paper—follow its directions, and come to our rescue; you will find us willing captives, if Griffith and yourself are our conquerors."

"What mean you, Katherine?" exclaimed her lover; "you at least are now in safety—'twould be madness to tempt your fate again. My vessel can and shall protect you, until your cousin is redeemed; and then, remember, I have a claim on you for life."

"And how would you dispose of me in the interval?" said the young maiden, retreating slowly from his advances.

"In the *Ariel*—by Heaven, you shall be her commander! I will bear that rank only in name."

"I thank you, thank you, Barnstable, but distrust my abilities to fill such a station," she said, laughing, though the color that again crossed her youthful features was like the glow of a summer's sunset, and even her mirthful eyes seemed to reflect their tints. "Do not mistake, saucy one. If I have done more than my sex will warrant, remember it was through a holy motive, and if I have more than a woman's enterprise, it must be——"

"To lift you above the weakness of your sex," he cried, "and to enable you to show your noble confidence in me."

"To fit me for, and to keep me worthy of being one day your wife." As she uttered these words she turned and disappeared, with a rapidity that eluded his attempt to detain her, behind an angle of the hedge that was near them. For a moment, Barnstable remained motionless, through surprise, and when he sprang forward in pursuit, he was able only to catch a glimpse of her light form, in the gloom of the evening, as she again vanished in a little thicket at some distance.

Barnstable was about to pursue, when the air lighted with a sudden flash, and the bellowing report of a cannon rolled along the cliffs, and was echoed among the hills far inland.

"Ay, grumble away, old dotard!" the disappointed young sailor muttered to himself, while he reluctantly obeyed the signal; "you are in as great a hurry to get out of your danger as you were to run into it."

The quick reports of three muskets from the barge beneath where he stood urged him to quicken his pace, and, as he threw himself carelessly down the rugged and dangerous passes of the cliffs, his experienced eye beheld the well-known lights displayed from the frigate, which commanded "the recall of all her boats."

CHAPTER III.

"In such a time as this, it is not meet
That every nice offense should bear its comment."
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE cliffs threw their dark shadows wide on the waters, and the gloom of the evening had so far advanced as to conceal the discontent that brooded over the ordinarily open brow of Barnstable as he sprang from the rocks into the boat, and took his seat by the side of the silent pilot.

"Shove off!" cried the lieutenant, in tones that his men knew must be obeyed. "A seaman's curse light on the folly that exposes planks and lives to such navigation; and all to burn some old timberman, or catch a Norway trader asleep! Give way, men, give way!"

Notwithstanding the heavy and dangerous surf that was beginning to tumble in upon the rocks in an alarming manner, the startled seamen succeeded in urging their light boat over the waves, and in a few seconds were without the point where danger was most to be apprehended. Barnstable had seemingly disregarded the

breakers as they passed, but sat sternly eying the foam that rolled by them in successive surges, until the boat rose regularly on the long seas, when he turned his looks around the bay in quest of the barge.

"Ay, Griffith has tired of rocking in his pillowed cradle," he muttered, "and will give us a pull to the frigate, when we ought to be getting the schooner out of this hard-featured landscape. This is just such a place as one of your sighing lovers would dote on; a little land, a little water, and a good deal of rock. Damme, Long Tom, but I am more than half of your mind, that an island now and then is all the *terra firma* that a seaman needs."

"It's reason and philosophy, sir," returned the sedate cockswain; "and what land there is should always be a soft mud, or a sandy ooze, in order that an anchor might hold, and to make soundings sartin. I have lost many a deep sea, besides hand-leads by the dozen, on rocky bottoms; but give me the roadstead where a lead comes up light and an anchor heavy. There's a boat pulling athwart our four-foot, Captain Barnstable; shall I run her aboard, or give her a berth, sir?"

"'Tis the barge!" cried the officer; "Ned has not deserted me, after all!"

A loud hail from the approaching boat confirmed this opinion, and, in a few seconds, the barge and whale-boat were again rolling by each other's side. Griffith was no longer reclining on the cushions of his seat, but spoke earnestly, and with a slight tone of reproach in his manner.

"Why have you wasted so many precious moments, when every minute threatens us with new dangers? I was obeying the signal, but I heard your oars, and pulled back to take out the pilot. Have you been successful?"

"There he is; and if he finds his way out through the shoals, he will earn a right to his name. This bids fair to be a night when a man will need a spy-glass to find the moon. But when you hear that I have been on those rascally cliffs, you will be more ready to excuse my delay, Mr. Griffith."

"You have seen the true man, I trust, or we incur this hazard to an evil purpose."

"Ay, I have seen him that is a true man, and him that is not," replied Barnstable, bitterly; "you have the boy with you, Griffith—ask him what his young eyes have seen."

"Shall I?" cried the young midshipman, laughing; "then I have seen a little clipper, in disguise, outsail an old man-of-war's man in a hard chase, and I have seen a straggling rover in long-togs as much like my cousin——"

"Peace, gabbler!" exclaimed Barnstable, in a voice of thunder; "would you detain the boats with your silly nonsense at a time like this? Away into the barge, sir, and if you find him willing to hear, tell Mr. Griffith what your foolish conjectures amount to at your leisure."

The boy stepped lightly from the whale-boat to the barge, whither the pilot had already preceded him, and, as he sank with a mortified air by the side of Griffith, he said, in a low voice:

"And that won't be long, I know, if Mr. Griffith thinks and feels on the coast of England as he thought and felt at home."

A silent pressure of his hand was the only reply that the young lieutenant made, before he paid the parting compliment to Barnstable, and directed his men to pull for their ship.

The boats were separating, and the splash of the oars was already heard, when the voice of the pilot was for the first time raised in earnest.

"Hold!" he cried; "hold water, I bid ye!"

The men ceased their efforts, at the commanding tones of his voice, and, turning toward the whale-boat, he continued:

"You will get your schooner under way immediately, Captain Barnstable, and sweep into the offing with as little delay as possible. Keep the ship well open from the northern headland, and, as you pass us, come within hail."

"This is a clean chart and plain sailing, Mr. Pilot," returned Barnstable; "but who is to justify my moving without orders, to Captain Munson? I have it in

black and white, to run the *Ariel* into this feather-bed sort of a place, and I must at least have it by signal or word of mouth from my betters, before my cut-water curls another wave. The road may be as hard to find going out as it was coming in —and then I had daylight as well as your written directions to steer by."

"Would you lie there to perish on such a night?" said the pilot, sternly. "Two hours hence this heavy swell will break where your vessel now rides so quietly."

"There we think exactly alike; but if I get drowned now, I am drowned according to orders; whereas, if I knock a plank out of the schooner's bottom, by following your directions, 'twill be a hole to let in mutiny, as well as sea-water. How do I know but the old man wants another pilot or two."

"That's philosophy," muttered the cockswain of the whale boat, in a voice that was audible; "but it's a hard strain on a man's conscience to hold on in such an anchorage!"

"Then keep your anchor down and follow it to the bottom," said the pilot to himself; "it's worse to contend with a fool than a gale of wind; but if——"

"No, no, sir—no fool either," interrupted Griffith. "Barnstable does not deserve the epithet, though he certainly carries the point of duty to the extreme. Heave up at once, Mr. Barnstable, and get out of this bay as fast as possible."

"Ah! you don't give the order with half the pleasure with which I shall execute it; pull away, boys—the *Ariel* shall never lay her bones in such a hard bed, if I can help it."

As the commander of the schooner uttered these words with a cheering voice, his men spontaneously shouted, and the whale-boat darted away from her companion, and was soon lost in the gloomy shadows cast from the cliffs.

In the meantime, the oarsmen of the barge were not idle, but by strenuous efforts they forced the heavy boat rapidly through the water, and in a few minutes she ran alongside of the frigate. During this period the pilot, in a voice which had lost all the startling fierceness and authority it had manifested in his short dialogue with Barnstable, requested Griffith to repeat to him, slowly, the names of the officers that belonged to his ship. When the young lieutenant had complied with this request, he observed to his companion:

"All good men and true, Mr. Pilot; and though this business in which you are just now engaged may be hazardous to an Englishman, there are none with us who will betray you. We need your services, and, as we expect good faith from you, so shall we offer it to you in exchange."

"And how know you that I need its exercise?" asked the pilot, in a manner that denoted a cold indifference to the subject.

"Why, though you talk pretty good English, for a native," returned Griffith, "yet you have a small bur-r-r in your mouth that would prick the tongue of a man who was born on the other side of the Atlantic."

"It is but of little moment where a man is born, or how he speaks," returned the pilot, coldly, "so that he does his duty bravely, and in good faith."

It was perhaps fortunate for the harmony of this dialogue that the gloom, which had now increased to positive darkness, completely concealed the look of scornful irony that crossed the handsome features of the young sailor as he replied:

"True, true, so that he does his duty, as you say, in good faith. But, as Barnstable observed, you must know your road well to travel among these shoals on such a night as this. Know you what water we draw?"

"'Tis a frigate's draught, and I shall endeavor to keep you in four fathoms; less than that would be dangerous."

"She's a sweet boat!" said Griffith; "and minds her helm as a marine watches the eye of his sergeant at a drill; but you must give her room in stays, for she forereaches, as if she would put out the wind's eye."

The pilot attended, with a practiced ear, to this description of the qualities of the ship that he was about to attempt extricating from an extremely dangerous situation. Not a syllable was lost on him; and

when Griffith had ended, he remarked, with the singular coldness that pervaded his manner:

"That is both a good and a bad quality in a narrow channel. I fear it will be the latter to-night, when we shall require to have the ship in leading-strings."

"I suppose we must feel our way with the lead?" said Griffith.

"We shall need both eyes and leads," returned the pilot, recurring insensibly to his soliloquizing tone of voice. "I have been both in and out in darker nights than this, though never with a heavier draught than a half-two."

"Then, by Heaven, you are not fit to handle that ship among these rocks and breakers!" exclaimed Griffith; "your men of a light draught never know their water; 'tis the deep keel only that finds a channel. Pilot! pilot! beware how you trifle with us ignorantly; for 'tis a dangerous experiment to play at hazards with an enemy."

"Young man, you know not what you threaten, nor whom," said the pilot, sternly, though his quiet manner still remained undisturbed; "you forget that you have a superior here, and that I have none."

"That shall be as you discharge your duty," cried Griffith; "for, if——"

"Peace!" interrupted the pilot, "we approach the ship; let us enter in harmony."

He threw himself back on the cushions when he had said this; and Griffith, though filled with the apprehensions of suffering, either by great ignorance or treachery on the part of his companion, smothered his feelings so far as to be silent, and they ascended the side of the vessel in apparent cordiality.

The frigate was already riding on lengthened seas that rolled in from the ocean at each successive moment with increasing violence, though her topsails still hung supinely from her yards; the air, which continued to breathe occasionally from the land, being unable to shake the heavy canvas of which they were composed.

The only sounds that were audible when Griffith and the pilot had ascended to the gangway of the frigate were produced by the sullen dashing of the sea against the massive bows of the ship, and the shrill whistle of the boatswain's mate, as he recalled the side-boys, who were placed on either side of the gangway, to do honor to the entrance of the first lieutenant and his companion.

But though such a profound silence reigned among the hundreds who inhabited the huge fabric, the light produced by a dozen battle-lanterns that were arranged in different parts of the decks served not only to exhibit faintly the persons of the crew, but the mingled feeling of curiosity and care that dwelt on most of their countenances.

Large groups of men were collected in the gangways, around the mainmast, and on the booms of the vessel, whose faces were distinctly visible, while numerous figures, lying along the lower yards, or bending out of the tops, might be dimly traced in the background, all of whom expressed by their attitudes the interest they took in the arrival of the boat.

Though such crowds were collected in other parts of the vessel, the quarter-deck was occupied only by the officers, who were disposed according to their several ranks and were equally silent and attentive as the remainder of the crew. In front stood a small collection of young men, who, by their similarity of dress, were the equals and companions of Griffith, though his junior in rank. On the opposite side of the vessel was a larger assemblage of youths who claimed Mr. Merry as their fellow. Around the capstan three or four figures were standing, one of whom wore a coat of blue, with the scarlet facings of a soldier, and another the black vestments of a ship's chaplain. Behind these, and nearer the passage to the cabin from which he had just ascended, stood the tall, erect form of the commander of the vessel.

After a brief salutation between Griffith and the junior officers, the former advanced, followed slowly by the pilot, to the place where he was expected by his veteran commander. The young man

removed his hat entirely, as he bowed with a little more than his usual ceremony, and said:

"We have succeeded, sir, though not without more difficulty and delay than were anticipated."

"But you have not brought off the pilot," said the captain, "and, without him, all our risk and trouble have been in vain."

"He is here," said Griffith, stepping aside, and extending his arm toward the man that stood behind him, wrapped to the chin in his coarse pea-jacket, and his face shadowed by the falling rim of a large hat that had seen much and hard service.

"This!" exclaimed the captain; "then there is a sad mistake—this is not the man I would have seen, nor can another supply his place."

"I know not whom you expected, Captain Munson," said the stranger, in a low, quiet voice; "but if you have not forgotten the day when a very different flag from that emblem of tyranny that now hangs over yon traffrail was first spread to the wind, you may remember the hand that raised it."

"Bring here the light!" exclaimed the commander, hastily.

When the lantern was extended toward the pilot, and the glare fell strong on his features, Captain Munson started as he beheld the calm blue eye that met his gaze, and the composed but pallid countenance of the other. Involuntarily raising his hat, and baring his silver locks, the veteran cried:

"It is he! though so changed——"

"That his enemies did not know him," interrupted the pilot, quickly; then touching the other by the arm, as he led him aside, he continued in a lower tone—"neither must his friends, until the proper hour shall arrive."

Griffith had fallen back to answer the eager questions of his messmates, and no part of this short dialogue was overheard by the officers, though it was soon perceived that their commander had discovered his error, and was satisfied that the proper man had been brought on board his vessel. For many minutes the two continued to pace a part of the quarter-deck by themselves, engaged in deep and earnest discourse.

As Griffith had but little to communicate, the curiosity of his listeners was soon appeased, and all eyes were directed toward that mysterious guide, who was to conduct them from a situation already surrounded by perils, which each moment not only magnified in appearance, but increased in reality.

CHAPTER IV.

——"Behold the threaden sails,
Borne with the invisible and creeping winds,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
Breasting the lofty surge."—SHAKESPEARE.

It has been already explained to the reader that there were threatening symptoms in the appearance of the weather to create serious forebodings of evil in the breast of a seaman. When removed from the shadows of the cliffs, the night was not so dark but objects could be discerned at some little distance, and in the eastern horizon there was a streak of fearful light impending over the gloomy waters, in which the swelling outline formed by the rising waves was becoming each moment more distinct, and consequently more alarming. Several dark clouds overhung the vessel, whose towering masts apparently propped the black vapor, while a few stars were seen twinkling, with a sickly flame, in the streak of clear sky that skirted the ocean. Still, light currents of air occasionally swept across the bay, bringing with them the fresh odor of the shore, but their flittering irregularity too surely foretold them to be the expiring breath of the land-breeze. The roaring of the surf, as it rolled on the margin of the bay, produced a dull, monotonous sound, that was only interrupted, at times, by a hollow bellowing, as a larger wave than usual broke violently against some cavity in the rock. Everything, in short, united to render the scene gloomy and portentous, without creating instant terror, for

the ship rose easily on the long billows, without even straightening the heavy cable that held her to her anchor.

The higher officers were collected around the capstan, engaged in earnest discourse about their situation and prospects, while some of the oldest and most favored seamen would extend their short walk to the hallowed precincts of the quarter-deck, to catch with greedy ears the opinions that fell from their superiors. Numberless were the uneasy glances that were thrown from both officers and men at their commander and the pilot, who still continued their secret communion in a distant part of the vessel. Once, an ungovernable curiosity, or the heedlessness of his years, led one of the youthful midshipmen near them, but a stern rebuke from his captain sent the boy, abashed and cowering, to hide his mortification among his fellows. This reprimand was received by the elder officers as an intimation that the consultation which they beheld was to be strictly inviolate; and, though it by no means suppressed the repeated expressions of their impatience, it effectually prevented an interruption to the communications, which all, however, thought unreasonably protracted for the occasion.

"This is no time to be talking over bearings and distances," observed the officer next in rank to Griffith; "but we should call the hands up, and try to kedge her off while the sea will suffer a boat to live."

"'Twould be a tedious and bootless job to attempt warping a ship for miles against a head-beating sea," returned the first-lieutenant; "but the land breeze yet flutters aloft, and if our light sails would draw, with the aid of this ebb-tide we might be able to shove her from the shore."

"Hail the tops, Griffith," said the other, "and ask if they feel the air above; 'twill be a hint at least to set the old man and that lubberly pilot in motion."

Griffith laughed as he complied with the request, and when he received the customary reply to his call, he demanded in a loud voice:

"Which way have you the wind aloft?"

"We feel a light cat's-paw, now and then, from the land, sir," returned the sturdy captain of the top; "but our topsail hangs in the clew-lines, sir, without winking."

Captain Munson and his companion suspended their discourse while this question and answer were exchanged, and then resumed their dialogue as earnestly as if it had received no interruption.

"If it did wink, the hint would be lost on our betters," said the officer of the marines, whose ignorance of seamanship added greatly to his perception of the danger, but who, from pure idleness, made more jokes than any other man in the ship. "That pilot would not receive a delicate intimation through his ears, Mr. Griffith; suppose you try him by the nose."

"Faith, there was a flash of gunpowder between us in the barge," returned the first-lieutenant, "and he does not seem a man to stomach such hints as you advise. Although he looks so meek and quiet, I doubt whether he has paid much attention to the Book of Job."

"Why should he?" exclaimed the chaplain, whose apprehensions at least equaled those of the marine, and with a much more disheartening effect; "I am sure it would have been a great waste of time; there are so many charts of the coast, and books on the navigation of these seas, for him to study, that I sincerely hope he has been much better employed."

A loud laugh was created at this speech among the listeners, and it apparently produced the effect that was so long anxiously desired, by putting an end to the mysterious conference between their captain and the pilot. As the former came forward toward his expecting crew, he said, in the composed, steady manner that formed the principal trait in his character:

"Get the anchor, Mr. Griffith, and make sail on the ship; the hour has arrived when we must be moving."

The cheerful "Ay! ay! sir!" of the young lieutenant was hardly uttered, before the cries of half a dozen midshipmen were heard summoning the boatswain and his mates to their duty.

There was a general movement in the living masses that clustered around the mainmast, on the booms, and in the gangways, though their habits of discipline held the crew a moment longer in suspense. The silence was first broken by the sound of the boatswain's whistle, followed by the hoarse cry of "All hands, up anchor, ahoy!"—the former rising on the night air from its first low, mellow notes to a piercing shrillness that gradually died away on the waters; and the latter bellowing through every cranny of the ship, like the hollow murmurs of distant thunder.

The change produced by the customary summons was magical. Human beings sprang out from between the guns, rushed up the hatches, threw themselves with careless activity from the booms, and gathered from every quarter so rapidly, that, in an instant, the deck of the frigate was alive with men. The profound silence, that had hitherto been only interrupted by the low dialogue of the officers, was now changed for the stern orders of the lieutenants, mingled with the shriller cries of the midshipmen, and the hoarse bawling of the boatswain's crew, rising above the tumult of preparation and general bustle.

The captain and pilot alone remained passive in this scene of general exertion, for apprehension had even stimulated that class of officers which is called "idlers" to unusual activity, though frequently reminded by their more experienced messmates that, instead of aiding, they retarded the duty of the vessel. The bustle, however, gradually ceased, and, in a few minutes, the same silence pervaded the ship as before.

"We are brought-to, sir," said Griffith, who stood overlooking the scene, holding in one hand a short speaking-trumpet, and grasping with the other one of the shrouds of the ship, to steady himself in the position he had taken on a gun.

"Heave round, sir," was the calm reply.

"Heave round!" repeated Griffith, aloud.

"Heave round!" echoed a dozen eager voices at once, and the lively strains of a fife struck up a brisk air to enliven the labor. The capstan was instantly set in motion, and the measured tread of the seamen was heard, as they stamped the deck in the circle of their march. For a few minutes no other sounds were heard, if we except the voice of an officer occasionally cheering the sailors, when it was announced that they "were short;" or, in other words, that the ship was nearly over her anchor.

"Heave and pull!" cried Griffith, when the quivering notes of the whistle were again succeeded by a general stillness in the vessel.

"What is to be done now, sir?" continued the lieutenant; "shall we trip the anchor? There seems not a breath of air, and, as the tide runs slack, I doubt whether the sea do not heave the ship ashore."

There was so much obvious truth in this conjecture that all eyes turned from the light and animation afforded by the decks of the frigate, to look abroad on the waters, in a vain desire to pierce the darkness, as if to read the fate of their apparently devoted ship from the aspect of Nature.

"I leave all to the pilot," said the captain, after he had stood a short time by the side of Griffith, anxiously studying the heavens and the ocean. "What say you, Mr. Gray?"

The man who was thus first addressed by name was leaning over the bulwarks, with his eyes bent in the same direction as the others; but as he answered he turned his face toward the speaker, and the light from the deck fell full upon his quiet features, which exhibited a calmness bordering on the supernatural, considering his station and responsibility.

"There is much to fear from this heavy ground-swell," he said, in the same unmoved tones as before; "but there is certain destruction to us if the gale that is brewing in the east finds us waiting its fury in this wild anchorage. All the hemp that was ever spun into cordage would not hold a ship an hour, chafing on these rocks, with a northeaster pouring its fury on her. If the powers of man

can compass it, gentlemen, we must get an offing, and that speedily."

"You say no more, sir, than the youngest boy in the ship can see for himself," said Griffith. "Ha! here comes the schooner!"

The dashing of the long sweeps in the water was now plainly audible, and the little *Ariel* was seen through the gloom, moving heavily under their feeble impulse. As she passed slowly under the stern of the frigate, the cheerful voice of Barnstable was first heard, opening the communication between them.

"Here's a night for spectacles, Captain Munson!" he cried; "but I thought I heard your fife, sir. I trust, in God, you do not mean to ride it out here till morning?"

"I like the berth as little as yourself, Mr. Barnstable," returned the veteran seaman, in his calm manner, in which anxiety was, however, beginning to grow evident. "We are short; but are afraid to let go our hold of the bottom, lest the sea cast us ashore. How make you out the wind?"

"Wind!" echoed the other; "there is not enough to blow a lady's curl aside. If you wait, sir, till the land-breeze fills your sails, you will wait another moon. I believe I've got my egg-shell out of that nest of gray-caps; but how it has been done in the dark, a better man than myself must explain."

"Take your directions from the pilot, Mr. Barnstable," returned his commanding officer, "and follow them strictly and to the letter."

A death-like silence, in both vessels, succeeded this order; for all seemed to listen eagerly to catch the words that fell from the man on whom even the boys now felt depended their only hopes for safety. A short time was suffered to elapse before his voice was heard, in the same low but distinct tones as before:

"Your sweeps will soon be of no use to you," he said, "against the sea that begins to heave in; but your light sails will help them to get you out. So long as you can head east-and-by-north, you are doing well, and you can stand on until you open the light from that northern headland, when you can heave-to, and fire a gun; but if, as I dread, you are struck aback before you open the light, you may trust to your lead on the larboard tack; but beware, with your head to the southward, for no lead will serve you there."

"I can walk over the same ground on one tack as on the other," said Barnstable, "and make both legs of a length."

"It will not do," returned the pilot. "If you fall off a point to starboard from east-and-by-north, in going large, you will find both rocks and points of shoals to bring you up; and beware, as I tell you, of the starboard tack."

"And how shall I find my way? You will let me trust to neither time, lead, nor log."

"You must trust to a quick eye and a ready hand. The breakers will only show you the dangers when you are not able to make out the bearings of the land. Tack in season, sir, and don't spare the lead when you head to port."

"Ay, ay," returned Barnstable, in a low, muttering voice. "This is a sort of blind navigation, with a vengeance, and all for no purpose that I can see. See! damme, eyesight is of about as much use now as a man's nose would be in reading the Bible."

"Softly, softly, Mr. Barnstable," interrupted his commander—for such was the anxious stillness in both vessels that even the rattling of the schooner's rigging was heard, as she rolled in the trough of the sea—"the duty on which Congress has sent us must be performed, at the hazard of our lives."

"I don't mind my life, Captain Munson," said Barnstable, "but there's a great want of conscience in trusting a vessel in such a place as this. However, it is a time to do and not to talk. But if there be such danger to an easy draught of water, what will become of the frigate? Had I not better play jackal, and try and feel the way for you?"

"I thank you," said the pilot; "the offer is generous, but would avail us nothing. I have the advantage of knowing the ground well, and must trust to my

memory and God's good favor. Make sail, make sail, sir, and, if you succeed, we will venture to break ground."

The order was promptly obeyed, and in a very short time the *Ariel* was covered with canvas. Though no air was perceptible on the decks of the frigate, the little schooner was so light that she succeeded in stemming her way over the rising waves, aided a little by the tide; and in a few minutes her low hull was just discernible in the streak of light along the horizon, with the dark outline of her sails rising above the sea, until their fanciful summits were lost in the shadows of the clouds.

Griffith had listened to the foregoing dailogue, like the rest of the junior officers, in profound silence; but when the *Ariel* began to grow indistinct to the eye, he jumped lightly from the gun to the deck, and cried:

"She slips off like a vessel from the stocks! Shall I trip the anchor, sir, and follow?"

"We have no choice," replied his captain. "You hear the question, Mr. Gray? Shall we let go the bottom?"

"It must be done, Captain Munson; we may want more drift than the rest of this tide to get us to a place of safety," said the pilot. "I would give five years from a life that I know will be short if the ship lay one mile farther seaward."

This remark was unheard by all except the commander of the frigate, who again walked aside with the pilot, where they resumed their mysterious communications. The words of assent were no sooner uttered, however, than Griffith gave forth from his trumpet the command to "heave away!" Again the strains of the fife were followed by the tread of the men at the capstan. At the same time that the anchor was heaving up the sails were loosened from the yards and opened to invite the breeze. In effecting this duty, orders were thundered through the trumpet of the first-lieutenant, and executed with the rapidity of thought. Men were to be seen, like spots in the dim light from the heavens, lying on every yard, or hanging as in air, while strange cries were heard issuing from every part of the rigging and each spar of the vessel. "Ready the fore-royal!" cried a shrill voice, as if from the clouds; "Ready the fore-yard!" uttered the hoarser tones of a seaman beneath him; "All ready aft sir,!" cried a third from another quarter; and in a few moments the order was given to "let fall."

The little light which fell from the sky was now excluded by the falling canvas, and a deeper gloom was cast athwart the decks of the ship, that served to render the brilliancy of the lanterns even vivid, while it gave to objects out-board a more appalling and dreary appearance than before.

Every individual, excepting the commander and his associate, was now earnestly engaged in getting the ship under way. The sounds of "We're away" were repeated by a burst from fifty voices, and the rapid evolutions of the capstan announced that nothing but the weight of the anchor was to be lifted. The hauling of cordage, the rattling of blocks, blended with the shrill calls of the boatswain and his mates, succeeded; and though to a landsman all would have appeared confusion and hurry, long practice and strict discipline enabled the crew to exhibit their ship under a cloud of canvas, from her deck to the trucks, in less time than we have consumed in relating it.

For a few minutes the officers were not disappointed by the result, for, though the heavy sails flapped lazily against the masts, the light duck on the loftier spars swelled outwardly, and the ship began sensibly to yield to their influence.

"She travels! she travels!" exclaimed Griffith, joyously. "Ah, the hussy; she has as much antipathy to the land as any fish that swims! It blows a little gale aloft yet."

"We feel its dying breath," said the pilot, in low, soothing tones, but in a manner so sudden as to startle Griffith, at whose elbow they were unexpectedly uttered. "Let us forget, young man, everything but the number of lives that depend this night on your exertions and my knowledge."

"If you be but half as able to exhibit the one as I am willing to make the other, we shall do well," returned the lieutenant in the same tone. "Remember, whatever may be your feelings, that *we* are on the enemy's coast, and love it not enough to wish to lay our bones here."

With this brief explanation they separated, the vessel requiring the constant and close attention of the officers to her movements.

The exultation produced in the crew by the progress of their ship through the water was of short duration, for the breeze that had seemed to await their motions, after forcing the vessel for a quarter of a mile, fluttered for a few minutes amid their light canvas, and then left them entirely. The quartermaster, whose duty it was to superintend the helm, soon announced that he was losing the command of the vessel, as she was no longer obedient to her rudder. This ungrateful intelligence was promptly communicated to his commander by Griffith, who suggested the propriety of again dropping an anchor.

"I refer you to Mr. Gray," returned the captain; "he is the pilot, sir, and with him rests the safety of the vessel."

"Pilots sometimes lose ships as well as save them," said Griffith. "Know you the man well, Captain Munson, who holds all our lives in his keeping, and so coolly as if he cared but little for the venture?"

"Mr. Griffith, I do know him; he is, in my opinion, both competent and faithful. This much I tell you, to relieve your anxiety; more you must not ask. But is there not a shift of wind?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed the lieutenant; "if that northeaster catches us within the shoals, our case will be desperate indeed!"

The heavy rolling of the vessel caused an occasional expansion, and as sudden a reaction, in their sails, which left the oldest seaman in the ship in doubt which way the currents of air were passing, or whether there existed any that were not created by the flapping of their own canvas. The head of the ship, however, began to fall off from the sea, and notwithstanding the darkness, it soon became apparent that she was driving in bodily toward the shore.

During these few minutes of gloomy doubt, Griffith, by one of those sudden revulsions of the mind that connect the opposite extremes of feeling, lost his animated anxiety, and relapsed into the listless apathy that so often came over him, even in the most critical moments of trial and danger. He was standing with one elbow resting on his capstan, shading his eyes from the light of the battle-lantern that stood near him with one hand, when he felt a gentle pressure of the other that recalled his recollection. Looking affectionately, though still recklessly, at the boy who stood at his side, he said:

"Dull music, Mr. Merry."

"So dull, sir, that I can't dance to it," returned the midshipman. "Nor do I believe there is a man in the ship who would not rather hear 'The girl I left behind me' than those execrable sounds."

"What sounds, boy? The ship is as quiet as the Quaker meeting in the Jerseys, before your good old grandfather used to break the charm of silence with his sonorous voice."

"Ah! laugh at my peaceable blood, if thou wilt, Mr. Griffith," said the arch youngster; "but remember, there is a mixture of it in all sorts of veins. I wish I could hear one of the old gentleman's chants now, sir; I could always sleep to them, like a gull in the surf. But he that sleeps to-night, with that lullaby, will make a nap of it."

"Sounds! I hear no sounds, boy, but the flapping aloft; even that pilot, who struts the quarter-deck like an admiral, has nothing to say."

"Is not that a sound to open a seaman's ear?"

"It is, in truth, a heavy roll of the surf, lad, but the night air carries it heavily to our ears. Know you not the sounds of the surf yet, yonker?"

"I know it too well, Mr. Griffith, and do not wish to know it better. How fast are we tumbling in toward that surf, sir?"

"I think we hold our own," said Griffith,

rousing again; "though we had better anchor. Luff, fellow, luff—you are broadside to the sea!"

The man at the wheel repeated his former intelligence, adding a suggestion that he thought the ship was "gathering stern-way."

"Haul up your courses, Mr. Griffith," said Captain Munson, "and let us feel the wind."

The rattling of the blocks was soon heard, and the enormous sheets of canvas that hung from the lower yards were instantly suspended "in the brails." When this change was effected, all on board stood silent and breathless, as if expecting to learn their fate by the result. Several contradictory opinions were at length hazarded among the officers, when Griffith seized the candle from the lantern, and, springing on one of the guns, held it on high, exposed to the action of the air. The little flame waved, with uncertain glimmering for a moment, and then burned steadily, in a line with the masts. Griffith was about to lower his extended arm, when, feeling a slight sensation of coolness on his hand, he paused, and the light turned slowly toward the land, flared, flickered, and finally deserted the wick.

"Lose not a moment, Mr. Griffith," cried the pilot aloud; "clew up and furl everything but your three topsails, and let them be double-reefed. Now is the time to fulfil your promise."

The young man paused one moment in astonishment, as the clear, distinct tones of the stranger struck on his ears so unexpectedly; but, turning his eyes to seaward, he sprang on the deck, and proceeded to obey the order, as if life and death depended on his dispatch.

CHAPTER V.

"She rights! she rights, boys! ware off shore!"
—*Song.*

THE extraordinary activity of Griffith, which communicated itself with promptitude to the crew, was produced by a sudden alteration in the weather. In place of the well-defined streak along the horizen, that has been already described, an immense body of misty light appeared to be moving in, with rapidity, from the ocean, while a distinct but distant roaring announced the sure approach of the tempest that had so long troubled the waters. Even Griffith, while thundering his orders through the trumpet, and urging the men by his cries, to expedition, would pause for instants to cast anxious glances in the direction of the coming storm; and the faces of the sailors who lay on the yards were turned instinctively toward the same quarter of the heavens, while they knotted the reef points, or passed the gaskets that were to confine the unruly canvas to the prescribed limits.

The pilot alone, in that confused and busy throng, where voice rose above voice, and cry echoed cry, in quick succession, appeared as if he held no interest in the important stake. With his eyes steadily fixed on the approaching mist, and his arms folded together in composure, he stood calmly waiting the result.

The ship had fallen off, with her broadside to the sea, and was become unmanageable, and the sails were already brought into the folds necessary to her security, when the quick and heavy fluttering of canvas was thrown across the water, with all the gloomy and chilling sensations that such sounds produce where darkness and danger unite to appall the seaman.

"The schooner has it!" cried Griffith: "Barnstable has held on, like himself, to the last moment. God send that the squall leave him cloth enough to keep him from the shore!"

"His sails are easily handled," the commander observed, "and she must be over the principal danger. We are falling off before it, Mr. Gray; shall we try a cast of the lead?"

The pilot turned from his contemplative posture, and moved slowly across the deck before he returned any reply to this question—like a man who not only felt that everything depended on himself, but that he was equal to the emergency.

"'Tis unnecessary," he at length an-

swered; "'twould be certain destruction to be taken aback; and it is difficult to say, within several points, how the wind may strike us."

"'Tis difficult no longer," cried Griffith; "for here it comes, and in right earnest!"

The rushing sounds of the wind were now, indeed, heard at hand, and the words were hardly past the lips of the young lieutenant before the vessel bowed down heavily to one side, and then, as she began to move through the water, rose again majestically to her upright position, as if saluting, like a courteous champion, the powerful antagonist with which she was about to contend. Not another minute elapsed before the ship was throwing the waters aside, with a lively progress, and, obedient to her helm, was brought as near to the desired course as the direction of the wind would allow. The hurry and bustle on the yards gradually subsided, and the men slowly descended to the deck, all straining their eyes to pierce the gloom in which they were enveloped, and some shaking their heads in melancholy doubt, afraid to express the apprehensions they really entertained. All on board anxiously waited for the fury of the gale; for there were none so ignorant or inexperienced in that gallant frigate as not to know that as yet they only felt the infant effects of the wind. Each moment, however, it increased in power, though so gradual was the alteration that the relieved mariners began to believe that all their gloomy forebodings were not to be realized. During this short interval of uncertainty, no other sounds were heard than the whistling of the breeze, as it passed quickly through the mass of rigging that belonged to the vessel, and the dashing of the spray that began to fly from her bows, like the foam of a cataract.

"It blows fresh," cried Griffith, who was the first to speak in that moment of doubt and anxiety; "but it is no more than a capful of wind after all. Give us elbow-room, and the right canvas, Mr. Pilot, and I'll handle the ship like a gentleman's yacht, in this breeze."

"Will she stay, think ye, under this sail?" said the low voice of the stranger.

"She will do all that man, in reason, can ask of wood and iron," returned the lieutenant; "but the vessel don't float the ocean that will tack under double-reefed topsails alone, against a heavy sea. Help her with the courses, pilot, and you shall see her come round like a dancing-master."

"Let us feel the strength of the gale first," returned the man who was called Mr. Gray, moving from the side of Griffith to the weather gangway of the vessel, where he stood in silence, looking ahead of the ship, with an air of singular coolness and abstraction.

All the lanterns had been extinguished on the deck of the frigate, when her anchor was secured, and, as the first mist of the gale had passed over, it was succeeded by a faint light that was a good deal aided by the glittering foam of the waters, which now broke in white curls around the vessel in every direction. The land could be faintly discerned, rising like a heavy bank of black fog above the margin of the waters, and was only distinguishable from the heavens by its deeper gloom and obcurity. The last rope was coiled and deposited in its proper place by the seamen, and for several minutes the stillness of death pervaded the crowded decks. It was evident to every one that their ship was dashing at a prodigious rate through the waves; and as she was approaching, with such velocity, the quarter of the bay where the shoals and dangers were known to be situated, nothing but the habits of the most exact discipline could suppress the uneasiness of the officers and men within their own bosoms. At length the voice of Captain Munson was heard, calling to the pilot.

"Shall I send a hand into the chains, Mr. Gray," he said, "and try our water?"

Although this question was asked aloud, and the interest it excited drew many of the officers and men around him in eager impatience for his answer, it was unheeded by the man to whom it was addressed. His head rested on his

hand as he leaned over the hammock-cloths of the vessel, and his whole air was that of one whose thoughts wandered from the pressing necessity of their situation. Griffith was among those who had approached the pilot; and after waiting a mement, from respect, to hear the answer to his commander's question, he presumed on his own rank, and, leaving the circle that stood at a little distance, stepped to the side of the mysterious guardian of their lives.

"Captain Munson desires to know whether you wish a cast of the lead?" said the young officer, with a little impatience of manner. No immediate answer was made to this repetition of the question, and Griffith laid his hand unceremoniously on the shoulder of the other, with an intent to rouse him before he made another application for a reply, but the convulsive start of the pilot held him silent in amazement.

"Fall back there," said the lieutenant, sternly, to the men, who were closing around them in a compact circle; "away with you to your stations, and see all clear for stays!" The dense mass of heads dissolved at this order, like the water of one of the waves commingling with the ocean, and the lieutenant and his companion were left by themselves.

"This is not a time for musing, Mr. Gray," continued Griffith; "remember our compact, and look to your charge—is it not time to put the vessel in stays? Of what are you dreaming?"

The pilot laid his hand on the extended arm of the lieutenant and grasped it with a convulsive pressure as he answered:

"'Tis a dream of reality. You are young, Mr. Griffith, nor am I past the moon of life; but, should you live fifty years longer, you can never see and experience what I have encountered in my little period of three-and-thirty years!"

A good deal astonished at this burst of feeling, so singular at such a moment, the young sailor was at a loss for a reply; but, as his duty was uppermost in his thoughts, he still dwelt on the theme that most interested him.

"I hope much of your experience has been on this coast, for the ship travels lively," he said, "and the daylight showed us so much to dread that we do not feel overvaliant in the dark. How much longer shall we stand on, upon this tack?"

The pilot turned slowly from the side of the vessel, and walked toward the commander of the frigate, as he replied, in a tone that seemed deeply agitated by his melancholy reflections:

"You have your wish, then; much, very much, of my early life was passed on this dreaded coast. What to you is all darkness and gloom, to me is as light as if a noonday sun shone upon it. But tack your ship, sir, tack your ship; I would see how she works before we reach the point where she *must* behave well, or we perish!"

Griffith gazed at him in wonder, while the pilot slowly paced the quarter-deck, and then, rousing from his trance, gave forth the cheering order that called each man to his station to perform the desired evolution. The confident assurances which the young officer had given to the pilot respecting the qualities of his vessel, and his own ability to manage her, were fully realized by the result. The helm was no sooner put a-lee than the huge ship bore up gallantly against the wind, and, dashing directly through the waves, threw the foam high into the air, as she looked boldly into the very eye of the wind, and then, yielding gracefully to its power, she fell off on the other tack, with her head pointed from those dangerous shoals that she had so recently approached with such terrifying velocity. The heavy yards swung round as if they had been vanes to indicate the currents of the air, and in a few moments the frigate again moved, with stately progress, through the water, leaving the rocks and shoals behind her on one side of the bay, but advancing toward those that offered equal danger on the other.

During this time the sea was becoming more agitated and the violence of the wind was gradually increasing. The latter no longer whistled amid the cordage of the vessel, but it seemed to howl surlily

as it passed the complicated machinery that the frigate obtruded on its path. An endless succession of white surges rose above the heavy billows, and the very air was glittering with the light that was disengaged from the ocean. The ship yielded each moment more and more before the storm, and in less than half an hour from the time she had lifted her achor she was driven along with tremendous fury by the full power of the gale of wind. Still the hardy and experienced mariners who directed her movements held her to the course that was necessary to their preservation, and still Griffith gave forth, when directed by their unknown pilot, those orders that turned her in the narrow channel where alone safety was to be found.

So far, the performance of his duty appeared easy to the stranger, and he gave the required directions in those still, calm tones, that formed so remarkable a contrast to the responsibility of his situation. But when the land was becoming dim, in distance as well as darkness, and the agitated sea alone was to be discovered as it swept by them in foam, he broke in upon the monotonous roaring of the tempest with the sounds of his voice, seeming to shake off his apathy, and rouse himself to the occasion.

"Now is the time to watch her closely, Mr. Griffith," he cried: "here we get the true tide and the real danger. Place the best quartermaster of your ship in those chains, and let an officer stand by him, and see that he gives us the right water."

"I will take that office on myself," said the captain; "pass a light into the weather main-chains."

"Stand by your braces!" exclaimed the pilot, with startling quickness. "Heave away that lead!"

These preparations taught the crew to expect the crisis, and every officer and man stood in fearful silence, at his assigned station, awaiting the issue of the trial. Even the quartermaster at the cun gave out his orders to the men at the wheel, in deeper and hoarser tones than usual, as if anxious not to disturb the quiet and order of the vessel.

While this deep expectation pervaded the frigate, the piercing cry of the leadsman, as he called, "By the mark, seven," rose above the tempest, crossed over the decks, and appeared to pass away to leeward, borne on the blast like the warnings of some water-spirit.

"'Tis well," returned the pilot, calmly; "try it again."

The short pause was succeeded by another cry, "And a half five!"

"She shoals! she shoals!" exclaimed Griffith; "keep her a good full."

"Ay! you must hold the vessel in command, now," said the pilot, with those cool tones that are most appalling in critical moments, because they seem to denote most preparation and care.

The third call, "By the deep, four!" was followed by a prompt direction from the stranger to tack.

Griffith seemed to emulate the coolness of the pilot, in issuing the necessary orders to execute this maneuver.

The vessel rose slowly from the inclined position into which she had been forced by the tempest, and the sails were shaking violently, as if to release themselves from their confinement, while the ship stemmed the billows, when the well-known voice of the sailing-master was heard shouting from the forecastle:

"Breakers! breakers, dead ahead!'

This appalling sound seemed yet to be lingering about the ship, when a second voice cried:

"Breakers on our lee-bow!"

"We are in a bight of the shoals, Mr. Gray," cried the commander. "She loses her way; perhaps an anchor might hold her."

"Clear away that best bower!" shouted Griffith, through his trumpet.

"Hold on!" cried the pilot, in a voice that reached the very hearts of all who heard him; "hold on everything."

The young man turned fiercely to the daring stranger who thus defied the discipline of his vessel, and at once demanded:

"Who is it that dares to countermand my orders? Is it not enough that you run the ship into danger, but you must

interfere to keep her there? If another word——"

"Peace, Mr. Griffith," interrupted the captain, bending from the rigging, his gray locks blowing about in the wind, and adding a look of wildness to the haggard care that he exhibited by the light of his lantern; "yield the trumpet to Mr. Gray; he alone can save us."

Griffith threw his speaking-trumpet on the deck, and, as he walked proudly away, muttered, in bitterness of feeling:

"Then all is lost, indeed! and among the rest the foolish hopes with which I visited this coast."

There was, however, no time for reply; the ship had been rapidly running into the wind, and as the efforts of the crew were paralyzed by the contradictory orders they had heard, she gradually lost her way, and in a few seconds all her sails were taken aback.

Before the crew understood their situation, the pilot had applied the trumpet to his mouth, and, in a voice that rose above the tempest, he thundered forth his orders. Each command was given distinctly and with a precision that showed him to be master of his profession. The helm was kept fast, the head-yards swung up heavily against the wind, and the vessel was soon whirling round on her heel, with a retrograde movement.

Griffith was too much of a seaman not to perceive that the pilot had seized, with a perception almost intuitive, the only method that promised to extricate the vessel from her situation. He was young, impetuous and proud—but he was also generous. Forgetting his resentment and his mortification, he rushed forward among the men, and, by his presence and example, added certainty to the experiment. The ship fell off slowly before the gale, and bowed her yards nearly to the water, as she felt the blast pouring its fury on her broadside, while the surly waves beat violently against her stern, as if in reproach at departing from her usual manner of moving.

The voice of the pilot, however, was still heard, steady and calm, and yet so clear and high as to reach every ear; and the obedient seamen whirled the yards at his bidding, in despite of the tempest, as if they handled the toys of their childhood. When the ship had fallen off dead before the wind, her head-sails were shaken, her after-yards trimmed, and her helm shifted, before she had time to run upon the danger that had threatened, as well to leeward as to windward. The beautiful fabric, obedient to her government, threw her bows up gracefully toward the wind again, and, as her sails were trimmed, moved out from among the dangerous shoals in which she had been embayed, as steadily and swiftly as she had approached them.

A moment of breathless astonishment succeeded the accomplishment of this nice maneuver, but there was no time for the usual expressions of surprise. The stranger still held the trumpet, and continued to lift his voice amid the howlings of the blast, whenever prudence or skill required any change in the management of the ship. For an hour longer there was a fearful struggle for their preservation. the channel becoming at each step more complicated, and the shoals thickening around the mariners on every side. The lead was cast rapidly, and the quick eye of the pilot seemed to pierce the darkness with a keenness of vision that exceeded human power. It was apparent to all in the vessel that they were under the guidance of one who understood the navigation thoroughly, and their exertions kept pace with their reviving confidence. Again and again the frigate appeared to be rushing blindly on shoals where the sea was covered with foam, and where destruction would have been as sudden as it was certain, when the clear voice of the stranger was heard warning them of the danger, and inciting them to their duty. The vessel was implicitly yielded to his government; and during those anxious moments when she was dashing the waters aside, throwing the spray over her enormous yards, each ear would listen eagerly for those sounds that had obtained a command over the crew, that can only be acquired under such circumstances, by great steadiness and consummate skill.

The ship was recovering from the inaction of changing her course, in one of those critical tacks that she had made so often, when the pilot, for the first time, addressed the commander of the frigate, who still continued to superintend the all-important duty of the leadsman.

"Now is the pinch," he said, "and if the ship behaves well we are safe; but if otherwise, all we have yet done will be useless."

The veteran seaman whom he addressed left the chains at this portentous notice, and calling to his first lieutenant, required of the stranger an explanation of his warning.

"See you yon light on the southern headland?" returned the pilot; "you may know it from the star near it—by its sinking, at times, in the ocean. Now observe the hom-moc, a little north of it, looking like a shadow in the horizon—'tis a hill far inland. If we keep that light open from the hill we shall do well; but if not, we shall surely go to pieces."

"Let us tack again!" exclaimed the lieutenant.

The pilot shook his head, as he replied:

"There is no more tacking or box-hauling to be done to-night. We have barely room to pass out of the shoals on this course; and if we can weather the 'Devil's Grip,' we clear their utmost point; but if not, as I said before, there is but an alternative."

"If we had beaten out the way we entered," exclaimed Griffith, "we should have done well."

"Say, also, if the tide would have let us do so," returned the pilot calmly. "Gentlemen, we must be prompt; we have but a mile to go, and the ship appears to fly. That topsail is not enough to keep her up to the wind; we want both jib and mainsail."

"'Tis a perilous thing to loosen canvas in such a tempest!" observed the doubtful captain.

"It must be done," returned the collected stranger; "we perish without it—see! the light already touches the edge of the hom-moc; the sea casts us to leeward!"

"It shall be done!" cried Griffith, seizing the trumpet from the hand of the pilot.

The orders of the lieutenant were executed almost as soon as issued; and, everything being ready, the enormous folds of the mainsails were trusted loose to the blast. There was an instant when the result was doubtful; the tremendous threshing of the heavy sail seemed to bid defiance to all restraint, shaking the ship to her center; but art and strength prevailed, and gradually the canvas was distended, and, bellying as it filled, was drawn down to its usual place by the power of a hundred men. The vessel yielded to this immense addition of force, and bowed before it like a reed bending to a breeze. But the success of the measure was announced by a joyful cry from the stranger, that seemed to burst from his inmost soul.

"She feels it! she springs her luff! observe," he said, "the light opens from the hom-moc already: if she will only bear her canvas we shall go clear!"

A report, like that of a cannon, interrupted his exclamation, and something resembling a white cloud was seen drifting before the wind from the head of the ship till it was driven into the gloom far to leeward.

"'Tis the jib, blown from the bolt ropes," said the commander of the frigate. "This is no time to spread light duck—but the mainsail may stand it yet."

"The sail would laugh at a tornado," returned the lieutenant; "but the mast springs like a piece of steel."

"Silence all!" cried the pilot. "Now, gentlemen, we shall soon know our fate. Let her luff—luff you can!"

This warning effectually closed all discourse; and the hardy mariners, knowing that they had already done all in the power of man to insure their safety, stood in breathless anxiety, awaiting the result. At a short distance ahead of them the whole ocean was white with foam, and the waves, instead of rolling on in regular succession, appeared to be tossing about in mad gambols. A single streak of dark billows, not half a cable's length in width, could be discerned running into this chaos

of water; but it was soon lost to the eye amid the confusion of the disturbed element. Along this narrow path the vessel moved more heavily than before, being brought so near the wind as to keep her sails touching. The pilot silently proceeded to the wheel, and with his own hands he undertook the steerage of the ship. No noise proceeded from the frigate to interrupt the horrid tumult of the ocean; and she entered the channel among the breakers with the silence of a desperate calmness. Twenty times, as the foam rolled away to leeward, the crew were on the eve of uttering their joy, as they supposed the vessel past the danger; but breaker after breaker would still heave up before them, following each other into the general mass, to check their exultation. Occasionally the fluttering of the sails would be heard; and when the looks of the startled seamen were turned to the wheel, they beheld the stranger grasping the spokes, with his quick eye glancing from the water to the canvas. At length the ship reached a point where she appeared to be rushing directly into the jaws of destruction, when suddenly her coarse was changed, and her head receded rapidly from the wind. At the same instant the voice of the pilot was heard shouting:

"Square away the yards!—in mainsail!"

A general burst from the crew echoed "Square away the yards!" and, quick as thought, the frigate was seen gliding along the channel before the wind. The eye had hardly time to dwell on the foam, which seemed like clouds driving in the heavens, and directly the gallant vessel issued from her perils, and rose and fell on the heavy waves of the sea.

The seamen were yet drawing long breaths, and gazing behind them like men recovered from a trance, when Griffith approached the man who had so successfully conducted them through their perils.

The lieutenant grasped the hand of the other, as he said:

"You have this night proved yourself a faithful pilot, and such a seaman as the world cannot equal."

The pressure of the hand was warmly returned by the unknown mariner, who replied:

"I am no stranger to the seas, and I may yet find my grave in them. But you, too, have deceived me, you have acted nobly, young man, and Congress——"

"What of Congress?" asked Griffith, observing him to pause.

"Why, Congress is fortunate if it has many such ships as this," said the stranger, coldly, walking away toward the commander.

Griffith gazed after him a moment in surprise; but as his duty required his attention, other thoughts soon engaged his mind.

The vessel was pronounced to be in safety. The gale was heavy and increasing, but there was a clear sea before them, and, as she slowly stretched out into the bosom of the ocean, preparations were made for her security during its continuance. Before midnight everything was in order. A gun from the *Ariel* soon announced the safety of the schooner also, which had gone out by another and an easier channel that the frigate had not dared to attempt; when the commander directed the usual watch to be set and the remainder of the crew to seek their necessary repose.

The captain withdrew with the mysterious pilot to his own cabin. Griffith gave his last order, and, renewing his charge to the officer intrusted with the care of the vessel, he wished him a pleasant watch, and sought the refreshment of his own cot. For an hour the young lieutenant lay musing on the events of the day. The remark of Barnstable would occur to him, in connection with the singular comment of the boy; and then his thoughts would recur to the pilot, who, taken from the hostile shores of Britain, and with her accent on his tongue, had served them so faithfully and so well. He remembered the anxiety of Captain Munson to procure this stranger, at the very hazard from which they had just been relieved, and puzzled himself with conjecturing why a pilot was to be sought at such a risk. His more private feelings would then resume their sway, and the recollection of America,

his mistress and his home mingled with the confused images of the drowsy youth. The dashing of the billows against the side of the ship, the creaking of guns and bulkheads, with the roaring of the tempest, however, became gradually less and less distinct, until nature yielded to necessity, and the young man forgot even the romantic images of his love in the deep sleep of a seaman.

CHAPTER VI.

—"The letter! ay! the letter!
'Tis there a woman loves to speak her wishes;
It spares the blushes of the love-sick maiden,
And every word's a smile, each line a tongue."
—Duo.

The slumbers of Griffith continued till late on the following morning, when he was awakened by a report of a cannon, issuing from the deck above him. He threw himself listlessly from his cot, and, perceiving the officer of marines near him as his servant opened the door of his state room, he inquired, with some little interest in his manner, "if the ship was in chase of anything that a gun was fired?"

"'Tis no more than a hint to the *Ariel*," the soldier replied, "that there is bunting aboard for them to read. It seems as if all hands were asleep on board her, for we have shown her signals these ten minutes, and she takes us for a collier, I believe, by the respect she pays it."

"Say, rather, that she takes us for an enemy, and is wary," returned Griffith. "Brown Dick has played the English so many tricks himself that he is tender of his faith."

"Why, they have shown him a yellow flag over a blue one, with a cornet, and that spells *Ariel*, in every signal-book we have; surely he can't suspect the English of knowing how to read Yankee."

"I have known Yankees read more difficult English," said Griffith, smiling; "but, in truth, I suppose that Barnstable has been, like myself, keeping a dead reckoning of his time, and his men have profited by the occasion. She is lying to, I trust."

"Ay! like a cork in a mill-pond, and I dare say you are right. Give Barnstable plenty of sea room, a heavy wind, and but little sail, and he will send his men below, put that fellow he calls Long Tom at the tiller, and follow himself, and sleep as quiety as I ever could at church."

"Ah! yours is a somniferous orthodoxy, Captain Manuel," said the young sailor, laughing, while he slipped his arms into the sleeves of a morning roundabout, covered with the gilded trappings of his profession; "sleep appears to come most naturally to all you idlers. But give me a passage, and I will go up, and call the schooner down to us in the turning of an hour glass."

The indolent soldier raised himself from the leaning posture he had taken against the door of the state-room, and Griffith proceeded through the dark ward-room, up the narrow stairs that led him to the principal battery of the ship, and thence, by another and broader flight of steps, to the open deck.

The gale still blew strong, but steadily; the blue water of the ocean was rising in mimic mountains, that were crowned with white foam, which the wind at times lifted from its kindred element to propel in mist, through the air, from summit to summit. But the ship rode on these agitated billows with an easy and regular movement that denoted the skill with which her mechanical powers were directed. The day was bright and clear, and the lazy sun, who seemed unwilling to meet the toil of ascending to the meridian, was crossing the heavens with a southern inclination that hardly allowed him to temper the moist air of the ocean with his genial heat. At the distance of a mile, directly in the wind's eye, the *Ariel* was seen, obeying the signals which had caused the dialogue we have related. Her low, black hull was barely discernible, at moments, when she rose to the crest of a larger wave than common; but the spot of canvas that she exposed to the wind was to be seen, seeming to touch the water on either hand, as the little vessel rolled amid the seas. At times she was entirely hid from view, when the faint

lines of her raking masts would be again discovered issuing, as it were, from the ocean, and continuing to ascend, until the hull itself would appear, thrusting its bows into the air, surrounded by foam, and apparently ready to take its flight into another element.

After dwelling a moment on the beautiful sight we have attempted to describe, Griffith cast his eye upward, to examine, with the keenness of a seaman, the disposition of things aloft, and then turned his attention to those who were on the deck of the frigate.

His commander stood, in his composed manner, patiently awaiting the execution of his order by the *Ariel*, and at his side was placed the stranger who had so recently acted such a conspicuous part in the management of the ship. Griffith availed himself of daylight and his situation to examine the appearance of this singular being more closely than the darkness and confusion of the preceding night had allowed. He was a trifle below the middle size in stature, but his form was muscular and athletic, exhibiting the finest proportions of manly beauty. His face appeared rather characterized by melancholy and thought, than by that determined decision which he had so powerfully displayed in the moments of their most extreme danger; but Griffith well knew that it could also exhibit looks of the fiercest impatience. At present, it appeared to the curious youth, when compared to the glimpses he had caught by the lights of their lanterns, like the ocean at rest contrasted with the waters around him. The eyes of the pilot rested on the deck, or, when they did wander, it was with uneasy and rapid glances. The large pea-jacket that concealed most of his other attire was as roughly made, and of materials as coarse, as that worn by the meanest seaman in the vessel; and yet, it did not escape the inquisitive gaze of the young lieutenant that it was borne with an air of neatness and care that was altogether unusual in men of his profession. The examination of Griffith ended here, for the near approach of the *Ariel* attracted the attention of all on the deck of the frigate to the conversation that was about to pass between their respective commanders.

As the little schooner rolled along their stern, Captain Munson directed his subordinate to leave his vessel and repair on board the ship. As soon as the order was received, the *Ariel* rounded to, and drawing ahead into the smooth water occasioned by the huge fabric that protected her from the gale, the whale-boat was again launched from her decks, and manned by the same crew that had landed on those shores which were now faintly discerned far to leeward, looking like blue clouds on the skirts of the ocean.

When Barnstable had entered his boat, a few strokes sent it dancing over the waves to the side of the ship. The little vessel was then veered off to a distance, where it rode in safety, under the care of a boat-keeper, and the officer and his men ascended the side of the lofty frigate.

The usual ceremonials of reception were rigidly observed by Griffith and his juniors when Barnstable touched the deck; and, though every hand was ready to be extended toward the reckless seaman, none presumed to exceed the salutations of official decorum, until a short and private dialogue had taken place between him and the captain.

In the meantime, the crew of the whale-boat passed forward, and mingled with the seamen of the frigate, with the exception of the coxswain, who established himself in one of the gangways, where he stood in the utmost composure, fixing his eyes aloft, and shaking his head in evident dissatisfaction, as he studied the complicated mass of rigging above him. This spectacle soon attracted to his side some half-dozen youths, with Mr. Merry at their head, who endeavored to entertain their guest in a manner that should most conduce to the indulgence of their own waggish propensities.

The conversation between Barnstable and his superior soon ended; when the former, beckoning to Griffith, passed the wondering group who had collected around the capstan, awaiting his leisure to greet him more cordially, and led the way to the

ward-room with the freedom of one who felt himself no stranger. As this unsocial manner formed no part of the natural temper or ordinary deportment of the man, the remainder of the officers suffered their first-lieutenant to follow him alone, believing that duty required that their interview should be private. Barnstable was determined that it should be so, at all events; for he seized the lamp from the mess-table and entered the state-room of his friend, closing the door behind them and turning the key. When they were both within its narrow limits—pointing to the only chair the little apartment contained, with a sort of instinctive deference to his companion's rank—the commander of the schooner threw himself carelessly on a sea-chest; and, placing the lamp on the table, he opened the discourse as follows:

"What a night we had of it! Twenty times I thought I could see the sea breaking over you; and I had given you over as drowned men, or, what is worse, as men driven ashore, to be led to the prison ships of these islanders, when I saw your lights in answer to my gun. Had you hoisted the conscience of a murderer, you wouldn't have relieved him more than you did me by showing that bit of tallow and cotton, tipped with flint and steel. But, Griffith, I have a tale to tell of a different kind——"

"Of how you slept when you found yourself in deep water, and how your crew strove to outdo their commander, and how all succeeded so well that there was a gray head on board here that began to shake with displeasure," interrupted Griffith; "truly, Dick, you will get into lubberly habits on board that bubble in which you float about, where all hands go to sleep as regularly as the inhabitants of a poultry-yard go to roost."

"Not so bad, not half so bad, Ned," returned the other, laughing; "I keep as sharp a discipline as if we wore a flag. To be sure, forty men can't make as much parade as three or four hundred; but, as for making or taking in sail, I am your better any day."

"Ay, because a pocket-handkerchief is sooner opened and shut than a table-cloth. But I hold it to be unseamanlike to leave any vessel without human eyes, and those open, to watch whether she goes east or west, north or south."

"And who is guilty of such a dead man's watch?"

"Why, they say aboard here, that, when it blows hard, you seat the man you call Long Tom by the side of the tiller, tell him to keep her head to sea, and then pipe all hands to their nightcaps, where you all remain, comfortably stowed in your hammocks, until you are awakened by the snoring of your helmsman."

"'Tis a damned scandalous insinuation," cried Barnstable, with an indignation that he in vain attempted to conceal. "Who gives currency to such a libel, Mr. Griffith?"

"I had it of the marine," said his friend, losing the archness that had instigated him to worry his companion in the vacant air of one who was careless of everything; "but I don't believe half of it myself—I have no doubt you all had your eyes open last night, whatever you might have been about this morning."

"Ah? this morning! there was an oversight, indeed! But I was studying a new signal-book, Griffith, that has a thousand times more interest for me than all the bunting you can show, from the head to the heel of your masts."

"What! have you found out the Englishman's private talk?"

"No, no," said the other, stretching forth his hand, and grasping the arm of his friend. "I met last night one on those cliffs who has proved herself what I always believed her to be, and loved her for—a girl of quick thought and bold spirit."

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Katherine——"

Griffith started from his chair involuntarily at the sound of this name, and the blood passed quickly through the shades of his countenance, leaving it now pale as death, and then burning as if oppressed by a torrent from his heart. Struggling to overcome an emotion, which he appeared ashamed to betray, even to the

friend he most loved, the young man soon recovered himself so far as to resume his seat. when he asked, gloomily :

"Was she alone ? "

"She was; but she left with me this paper, and this invaluable book, which is worth a library of all other works."

The eye of Griffith rested vacantly on the treasure that the other valued so highly, but his hand seized eagerly the open letter which was laid on the table for his perusal. The reader will at once understand that it was in the handwriting of a female, and that it was the communication Barnstable had received from his betrothed on the cliffs. Its contents were as follows :

"Believing that Providence may conduct me where we shall meet, or whence I may be able to transmit to you this account, I have prepared a short statement of the situation of Cecilia Howard and myself; not, however, to urge you and Griffith to any rash or foolish hazards, but that you may both sit down, and, after due consultation, determine what is proper for our relief.

"By this time, you must understand the character of Colonel Howard too well to expect he will ever consent to give his niece to a rebel. He has already sacrificed to his loyalty, as he calls it (but I whisper to Cecilia, 'tis his treason), not only his native country, but no small part of his fortune also. In the frankness of my disposition (you know my frankness, Barnstable, but too well !) I confessed to him, after the defeat of the mad attempt Griffith made to carry off Cecilia, in Carolina, that I had been foolish enough to enter into some weak promise to the brother officer who had accompanied the young sailor in his traitorous visits to the plantation. Heigho ! I sometimes think it would have been better for us all if your ship had never been chased into the river, or, after she was there, if Griffith had made no attempt to renew his acquaintance with my cousin. The colonel received the intelligence as such a guardian would hear that his ward was about to throw away thirty thousand dollars and herself on a traitor to his king and country. I defended you stoutly : said that you had no king, as the tie was dissolved ; that America was your country, and that your profession was honorable; but it would not all do. He called you a rebel; that I was used to. He said you were a traitor; that, in his vocabulary, amounts to the same thing. He even hinted that you were a coward; and that I knew to be false, and did not hesitate to tell him so. He used fifty opprobrious terms that I cannot remember; but among others were the beautiful epithets of 'disorganizer,' 'leveler,' 'democrat,' and 'Jacobin' (I hope he did not mean a monk !). In short, he acted Colonel Howard in a rage. But as his dominion does not, like that of his favorite kings, continue from generation to generation, and one short year will release me from his power, and leave me mistress of my own actions—that is, if your fine promises are to be believed—I bore it all very well, being resolved to suffer anything but martyrdom, rather than abandon Cecilia. She, dear girl, has much more to distress her than I can have; she is not only the ward of Colonel Howard, but his niece, and his sole heir. I am persuaded this last circumstance makes no difference in either her conduct or her feelings; but he appears to think it gives him a right to tyrannize over her on all occasions. After all, Colonel Howard is a gentleman when you do not put him in a passion, and, I believe, a thoroughly honest man; and Cecilia even loves him. But a man who is driven from his country, in his sixtieth year, with the loss of near half his fortune, is not apt to canonize those who compel the change.

"It seems that when the Howards lived on this island, a hundred years ago, they dwelt in the county of Northumberland. Hither, then, he brought us, when political events, and his dread of becoming the uncle to a rebel, induced him to abandon America, as he says, forever. We have been here now three months, and for two-thirds of that time have lived in tolerable comfort, but latterly the papers have announced the arrival of the ship and your schooner in France; and from that mo-

ment as strict a watch has been kept over us as if we had meditated a renewal of the Carolina flight. The colonel on his arrival here hired a building, that is, part house, part abbey, part castle, and all prison; because it is said to have once belonged to an ancestor of his. In this delightful dwelling there are many cages that will secure more uneasy birds than we are. About a fortnight ago an alarm was given in a neighboring village which is situated on the shore, that two American vessels, answering your description, had been seen hovering along the coast; and as people in this quarter dream of nothing but that terrible fellow, Paul Jones, it was said that he was on board one of them. But I believe that Colonel Howard suspects who you really are. He was very minute in his inquiries, I hear; and since then has established a sort of garrison in the house, under the pretense of defending it against marauders, like those who are said to have laid my Lady Selkirk under contribution.

"Now understand me, Barnstable; on no account would I have you risk yourself on shore; neither must there be blood spilt, if you love me; but that you may know what sort of a place we are confined in, and by whom surrounded, I will describe both our prison and the garrison. The whole building is of stone, and not to be attempted with slight means. It has windings and turnings, both internally and externally, that would require more skill than I possess to make intelligible; but the rooms we inhabit are in the upper or third floor of a wing that you may call a tower if you are in a romantic mood, but which, in truth, is nothing but a wing. Would to God I could fly with it! If any accident should bring you in sight of the dwelling, you will know our rooms by the three smoky vanes that whiffle about its pointed roof, and also by the windows in that story being occasionally open. Opposite to our windows, at the distance of half a mile, is a retired, unfrequented ruin, concealed, in a great measure, from observation by a wood, and affording none of the best accommodation, it is true, but shelter in some of its vaults or apartments. I have prepared, according to the explanations you once gave me on this subject, a set of small signals of differently-colored silks, and a little dictionary of all the phrases that I could imagine as useful to refer to, properly numbered to correspond with the key and the flags, all of which I shall send you with this letter. You must prepare your own flags, and, of course, I retain mine, as well as a copy of the key and book. If opportunity should ever offer, we can have, at least, a pleasant discourse together; you from the top of the old tower in the ruins, and I from the east window of my dressing-room!

"But now for the garrison. In addition to the commandant, Colonel Howard, who retains all the fierceness of his former military profession, there is, as his second in authority, that bane of Cecilia's happiness, Kit Dillon, with his long Savannah face, scornful eyes of black, and skin of the same color. This gentleman, you know, is a distant relative of the Howards, and wishes to be more nearly allied. He is poor it is true, but then, as the colonel daily remarks, he is a good and loyal subject, and no rebel. When I asked why he was not in arms in these stirring times, contending for the prince he loves so much, the colonel answers that it is not his profession; that he has been educated for the law, and was destined to fill one of the highest judicial stations in the colonies, and that he hoped he should yet live to see him sentence certain nameless gentlemen to condign punishment. This was consoling, to be sure; but I bore it. However, he left Carolina with us, and here he is, and here he is likely to continue unless you can catch him, and anticipate his judgment on himself. The colonel has long desired to see this gentleman the husband of Cecilia, and since the news of your being on the coast, the siege has nearly amounted to a storm. The consequences are, that my cousin at first kept her room, and then the colonel kept her there, and even now she is precluded from leaving the wing we inhabit. In addition to these two principal jailers, we have four men-servants, two black and two white; and an

officer and twenty soldiers from the neighboring town are billeted on us, by particular desire, until the coast is declared free from pirates!—yes, that is the musical name they give you—and when their own people land, and plunder, and rob, and murder the men and insult the women, they are called heroes! It's a fine thing to be able to invent names and make dictionaries—and it must be your fault if mine has been framed for no purpose. I declare, when I recollect all the insulting and cruel things I hear in this country of my own and her people, it makes me lose my temper and forget my sex; but do not let my ill-humor urge you to anything rash; remember your life, remember their prisons, remember your reputation, but do not, do not forget your

"KATHERINE PLOWDEN.

"P.S.—I had almost forgotten to tell you that in the signal-book you will find a more particular description of our prison, where it stands, and a drawing of the grounds, etc."

When Griffith concluded this epistle, he returned it to the man to whom it was addressed, and fell back in his chair, in an attitude that denoted deep reflection.

"I knew she was here, or I should have accepted the command offered to me by our commissioners in Paris," he at length uttered; "and I thought that some lucky chance might throw her in my way; but this is bringing us close, indeed! This intelligence must be acted on, and that promptly. Poor girl! what does she not suffer in such a situation?"

"What a beautiful hand she writes!" exclaimed Barnstable; "'tis as clear, and as pretty, and as small, as her own delicate fingers. Griff, what a log-book she would keep!"

"Cecilia Howard touch the coarse leaves of a log-book!" cried the other, in amazement; but perceiving Barnstable to be poring over the contents of his mistress's letter, he smiled at their mutual folly, and continued silent. After a short time spent in cool reflection, Griffith inquired of his friend the nature and circumstances of his interview with Katherine Plowden. Barnstable related it, briefly, as it occurred, in the manner already known to the reader.

"Then," said Griffith, "Merry is the only one, besides ourselves, who knows of this meeting, and he will be too chary of the reputation of his kinswoman to mention it."

"Her reputation needs no shield, Mr. Griffith," cried her lover; "'tis as spotless as the canvas above your head, and——"

"Peace, dear Richard; I entreat your pardon; my words may have conveyed more than I intended; but it is important that our measures should be secret, as well as prudently concerted."

"We must get them both off," returned Barnstable, forgetting his displeasure the moment it was exhibited, "and that, too, before the old man takes it into his wise head to leave the coast. Did you ever get a sight of his instructions, or does he keep silent?"

"As the grave. This is the first time we have left port that he has not conversed freely with me on the nature of the cruise; but not a syllable has been exchanged between us on the subject since we sailed from Brest."

"Ah! that is your Jersey bashfulness," said Barnstable; "wait till I come alongside him, with my Eastern curiosity, and I pledge myself to get it out of him in an hour."

"'Twill be diamond cut diamond, I doubt," said Griffith, laughing; "you will find him as acute at evasion as you can possibly be at a cross-examination."

"At any rate he gives me a chance today; you know, I suppose, that he sent for me to attend a consultation of his officers on important matters?"

"I did not," returned Griffith, fixing his eyes intently on the speaker; "what has he to offer?"

"Nay, that you must ask your pilot, for, while talking to me, the old man would turn and look at the stranger every minute, as if watching for signals how to steer."

"There is a mystery about that man, and our connection with him, that I can-

not fathom," said Griffith. "But I hear the voice of Manual calling for me; we are wanted in the cabin. Remember, you do not leave the ship without seeing me again."

"No, no, my dear fellow; from the public we must retire to another private consultation."

The young men arose, and Griffith, throwing off the roundabout in which he had appeared on deck, drew on a coat of more formal appearance, and, taking a sword carelessly in his hand, they proceeded together along the passage already described to the gun-deck, where they entered, with the proper ceremonials, into the principal cabin of the frigate.

CHAPTER VII.

"Sempronius, speak."—CATO.

THE arrangements for the consultation were brief and simple. The veteran commander of the frigate received his officers with punctilious respect, and pointing to the chairs that were placed around the table, which was a fixture in the center of the cabin, he silently seated himself, and his example was followed by all without ceremony. In taking their stations, however, a quiet but rigid observance was paid to the rights of seniority and rank. On the right of the captain was placed Griffith, as next in authority, and opposite to him was seated the commander of the schooner. The officer of marines, who was included in the number, held the next situation in point of precedence, the same order being observed at the bottom of the table, which was occupied by a hard-featured, square-built, athletic man, who held the office of sailing-master. When order was restored, after the short interruption of taking their places, the officer who had required the advice of his inferiors opened the business on which he demanded their opinions.

"My instructions direct me, gentlemen," he said, "after making the coast of England, to run the land down——"

The hand of Griffith was elevated respectfully for silence, and the veteran paused, with a look that inquired the reason for his interruption.

"We are not alone," said the lieutenant, glancing his eye toward the part of the cabin where the pilot stood, leaning on one of the guns, in an attitude of easy indulgence.

The stranger moved not at this direct hint; neither did his eye change from his close survey of the chart that lay near him on the deck. The captain dropped his voice to tones of cautious respect, as he replied:

"'Tis only Mr. Gray. His services will be necessary on the occasion and therefore nothing need be concealed from him."

Glances of surprise were exchanged among the young men; but Griffith bowing his silent acquiescence in the decision of his superior, the latter proceeded:

"I was ordered to watch for certain signals from the headlands that we made, and was furnished with the best of charts, and such directions as enabled us to stand into the bay we entered last night. We have now obtained a pilot, and one who has proved himself a skillful man; such a one, gentlemen, as no officer need hesitate to rely on, in any emergency, either on account of his integrity or his knowledge."

The veteran paused and turned his looks on the countenances of the listeners, as if to collect their sentiments on this important point. Receiving no other reply than the one conveyed by the silent inclinations of the heads of his hearers, the commander resumed his explanations, referring to an open paper in his hand:

"It is known to you all, gentlemen, that the unfortunate question of retaliation has been much agitated between the two governments, our own and that of the enemy. For this reason, and for certain political purposes, it has become an object of solicitude with our commissioners in Paris to obtain a few individuals of character from the enemy, who may be held as a check on their proceedings, while at the same time it brings the evils of war, from our own shores, home to those who

have caused it. An opportunity now offers to put this plan in execution, and I have collected you in order to consult on the means."

A profound silence succeeded this unexpected communication of the object of their cruise. After a short pause the captain added, addressing himself to the sailing-master:

"What course would you advise me to pursue, Mr. Boltrope?"

The weather-beaten seaman who was thus called on to break through the difficulties of a knotty point with his opinion, laid one of his short, bony hands on the table, and began to twirl an inkstand with great industry, while with the other he conveyed a pen to his mouth, which was apparently masticated with all the relish that he could possibly have felt had it been a leaf from the famous Virginian weed. But perceiving that he was expected to answer, after looking first to his right hand and then to his left, he spoke as follows, in a hoarse, thick voice, in which the fogs of the ocean seemed to have united with sea-damps and colds to destroy everything like melody:

"If this matter is ordered it is to be done, I suppose," he said, "for the old rule runs, 'Obey orders, if you break owners;' though the maxim which says, 'One hand for the owner, and t'other for yourself,' is quite as good, and has saved many a hearty fellow from a fall that would have balanced the purser's books. Not that I mean a purser's books are not as good as any other man's; but that, when a man is dead, his account must be closed, or there will be a false muster. Well, if the thing is to be done, the next question is, *how* is it to be done? There is many a man that knows there is too much canvas on a ship who can't tell how to shorten sail. Well, then, if the thing is really to be done, we must either land a gang to seize them, or we must show false lights and sham colors to lead them off to the ship. As for landing, Captain Munson, I can only speak for one man, and that is myself, which is to say that, if you run the ship with her jib-boom into the King of England's parlor windows, why, I'm consenting, nor do I care how much of his crockery is cracked in so doing; but, as to putting the print of my foot on one of his sandy beaches, if I do, that is, always speaking for only one man, and saving your presence, may I hope to be d——d!"

The young men smiled as the tough old seaman uttered his sentiments so frankly, rising with his subject to that which with him was the climax of all discussion; but his commander, who was but a more improved scholar from the same rough school, appeared to understand his arguments entirely, and, without altering a muscle of his rigid countenance, he required the opinion of the junior lieutenant.

The young man spoke firmly, but modestly, though the amount of what he said was not much more distinct than that uttered by the master, and was very much to the same purpose, with the exception that he appeared to entertain no personal reluctance to trusting himself on dry ground.

The opinions of the others grew gradually more explicit and clear as they ascended in the scale of rank, until it came to the turn of the captain of the marines to speak. There was a trifling exhibition of professional pride about the soldier in delivering his sentiments on a subject that embraced a good deal more of his peculiar sort of duty than ordinarily occurred in the usual operations of the frigate.

"It appears to me, sir, that the success of this expedition depends altogether upon the manner in which it is conducted." After this lucid opening, the soldier hesitated a moment, as if to collect his ideas for a charge that should look down all opposition, and proceeded: "The landing, of course, will be effected on a fair beach, under cover of the frigate's guns, and, could it possibly be done, the schooner should be anchored in such a manner as to throw in a flanking fire on the point of debarkation. The arrangements for the order of march must a good deal depend on the distance to go over; though I should think, sir, an advanced party of seamen, to act as pioneers for the column of marines, should be pushed a short dis-

tance in front, while the baggage and baggage-guard might rest upon the frigate until the enemy was driven into the interior, when it could advance without danger. There should be flank-guards, under the orders of two of the oldest midshipmen; and a light corps might be formed of the topmen to co-operate with the marines. Of course, sir, Mr. Griffith will lead, in person, the musket-men and boarders, armed with their long pikes, whom I presume he will hold in reserve, as I trust my military claims and experience entitle me to the command of the main body."

"Well done, field-marshal!" cried Barnstable, with a glee that seldom regarded time or place; "you should never let salt water mould your buttons; but in Washington's camp, ay! and in Washington's tent, you should swing your hammock in future. Why, sir, do you think we are about to invade England?"

"I know that every military movement should be executed with precision, Captain Barnstable," returned the marine. "I am too much accustomed to hear the sneers of the sea-officers to regard what I know proceeds from ignorance. If Captain Munson is disposed to employ me and my command in this expedition, I trust he will discover that marines are good for something more than to mount guard and pay salutes." Then turning haughtily from his antagonist, he continued to address himself to their common superior, as if disdaining further intercourse with one who, from the nature of the case, must be unable to comprehend the force of what he said. "It will be prudent, Captain Munson, to send out a party to reconnoiter, before we march; and, as it may be necessary to defend ourselves in case of a repulse, I would beg leave to recommend that a corps be provided with intrenching tools, to accompany the expedition. They would be extremely useful, sir, in assisting to throw up field-works; though, I doubt not, tools might be found in abundance in this country, and laborers impressed for the service, on an emergency."

This was too much for the risibility of Barnstable, who broke forth in a fit of scornful laughter, which no one saw fit to interrupt; though Griffith, on turning his head to conceal the smile that was gathering on his own face, perceived the fierce glance which the pilot threw at the merry seaman and wondered at its significance and impatience. When Captain Munson thought that the mirth of the lieutenant was concluded, he mildly desired his reasons for amusing himself so exceedingly with the plans of the marine.

"'Tis a chart for a campaign!" cried Barnstable, "and should be sent off express to Congress, before the Frenchmen are brought into the field!"

"Have you any better plan to propose, Mr. Barnstable?" inquired the patient commander.

"Better! ay, one that will take no time and cause no trouble to execute it," cried the other; "'tis a seaman's job, sir, and must be done with a seaman's means."

"Pardon me, Captain Barnstable," interrupted the marine, whose jocular vein was entirely absorbed in his military pride; "if there be service to be done on shore, I claim it as my right to be employed."

"Claim what you will, soldier; but how will you carry on the war with a parcel of fellows who don't know one end of a boat from the other?" returned the reckless sailor. "Do you think that a barge or a cutter is to be beached in the same manner you ground firelock, by word of command? No, no, Captain Manual—I honor your courage, for I have seen it tried, but d——e if——"

"You forget we wait for your project, Mr. Barnstable," said the veteran.

"I crave your patience, sir, but no project is necessary. Point out the bearings and the distance of the place where the men you want are to be found, and I will take the heel of the gale, and run in to the land, always speaking for good water and no rocks. Mr. Pilot, you will accompany me, for you carry as true a map of the bottom of these seas in your head as ever was made of dry ground. I will look out for good anchorage; or, if the wind should blow off-shore, let the schooner stand off

and on, till we should be ready to take the broad sea again. I would land out of my whale-boat, with Long Tom and a boat's crew, and, finding out the place you will describe, we shall go up and take the men you want, and bring them aboard. It's all plain sailing; though, as it is a well-peopled country, it may be necessary to do our shore-work in the dark."

"Mr. Griffith, we only wait for your sentiments," proceeded the captain, "when, by comparing opinions, we may decide on the most prudent course."

The first-lieutenant had been much absorbed in thought during the discussion of the subject, and might have been, on that account, better prepared to give his opinion with effect. Pointing to the man who yet stood behind him, leaning on a gun, he commenced by asking:

"Is it your intention that man shall accompany the party?"

"It is."

"And from him you expect the necessary information, sir, to guide your movements?"

"You are altogether right."

"If, sir, he has but a moiety of the skill on the land that he possesses on the water, I will answer for his success," returned the lieutenant, bowing slightly to the stranger, who received the compliment by a cold inclination of his head. "I must desire the indulgence of both Mr. Barnstable and Captain Manual," he continued, "and claim the command as of right belonging to my rank."

"It belongs naturally to the schooner," exclaimed the impatient Barnstable.

"There may be enough for us all to do," said Griffith, elevating a finger to the other, in a manner, and with an impressive look, that was instantly comprehended. "I neither agree wholly with the one nor the other of those gentlemen. 'Tis said that, since our appearance on the coast, the dwellings of many of the gentry are guarded by small detachments of soldiers from the neighboring towns."

"Who says it?" asked the pilot, advancing among them with a suddenness that caused a general silence.

"I say it, sir," returned the lieutenant, when the momentary surprise had passed away.

"Can you vouch for it?"

"I can."

"Name a house, or an individual, that is thus protected."

Griffith gazed at the man who thus forgot himself in the midst of a consultation like the present, and, yielding to his native pride, hesitated to reply. But mindful of the declarations of his captain, and the recent service of the pilot, he at length said, with a little embarrassment of manner:

"I know it to be the fact, in the dwelling of a Colonel Howard who resides but a few leagues to the north of us."

The stranger started at the name, and then, raising his eye keenly to the face of the young man, appeared to study his thoughts in his varying countenance. But the action, and the pause that followed, were of short continuance. His lip slightly curled, whether in scorn or with a concealed smile would have been difficult to say, so closely did it resemble both, and, as he dropped quietly back to his place at the gun, he said:

"'Tis more than probable you are right, sir; and, if I might presume to advise Captain Munson, it would be to lay great weight on your opinion."

Griffith turned, to see if he could comprehend more meaning in the manner of the stranger than his words expressed, but his face was again shaded by his hand and his eyes were once more fixed on the chart with the same vacant abstraction as before.

"I have said, sir, that I agree wholly neither with Mr. Barnstable nor Captain Manual," continued the lieutenant, after a short pause. "The command of this party is mine, as the senior officer, and I must beg leave to claim it. I certainly do not think the preparation Captain Manual advises necessary; neither would I undertake the duty with as little caution as Mr. Barnstable proposes. If there are soldiers to be encountered, we should have soldiers to oppose them; but as it must be sudden boat-work, and regular evolutions must give place to a seaman's

bustle, a sea-officer should command. Is my request granted, Captain Munson?"

The veteran replied, without hesitation:

"It is, sir; it was my intention to offer you the service, and I rejoice to see you accept it so cheerfully,"

Griffith with difficulty concealed the satisfaction with which he listened to his commander, and a radiant smile illumined his pale features, when he observed:

"With me then, sir, let the responsibility rest. I request that Captain Manual, with twenty men, may be put under my orders, if that gentleman does not dislike the duty." The marine bowed, and cast a glance of triumph at Barnstable. "I will take my own cutter, with her tried crew, go on board the schooner, and when the wind lulls we will run in to the land, and then be governed by circumstances."

The commander of the schooner threw back the triumphant look of the marine, and exclaimed in his joyous manner:

"'Tis a good plan, and done like a seaman, Mr. Griffith. Ay, ay, let the schooner be employed; and, if it be necessary, you shall see her anchored in one of their duck-ponds, with her broadside to bear on the parlor-windows of the best house in the island. But twenty marines! they will cause a jam in my little craft."

"Not a man less than twenty would be prudent," returned Griffith. "More service may offer than that we seek."

Barnstable well understand his allusion, but still he replied:

"Make it all seamen, and I will give you room for thirty. But these soldiers never know how to stow away their arms and legs, unless at a drill. One will take the room of two sailors; they swing their hammocks athwart-ships, heads to leeward, and then turn out wrong end uppermost at the call. Why, damn it, sir, the chalk and rotten-stone of twenty soldiers will choke my hatches!"

"Give me the launch, Captain Munson!" exclaimed the indignant marine, "and we will follow Mr. Griffith in an open boat, rather than put Captain Barnstable to so much inconvenience."

"No, no, Manual," cried the other, extending his muscular arm across the table, with an open palm, to the soldier; "you would all become so many Jonahs in uniform, and I doubt whether the fish could digest your cartridge boxes and bayonet belts. You shall go with me, and learn, with your own eyes, whether we keep the cat's watch aboard the *Ariel* that you joke about."

The laugh was general, at the expense of the soldier, if we except the pilot and the commander of the frigate. The former was a silent and apparently an abstracted, but, in reality, a deeply interested listener to the discourse; and there were moments when he bent his looks on the speakers as if he sought more in their characters than was exhibited by the gay trifling of the moment. Captain Munson seldom allowed a muscle of his wrinkled features to disturb their repose; and if he had not the real dignity to repress the untimely mirth of his officers, he had too much good nature to wish to disturb their harmless enjoyments. He expressed himself satisfied with the proposed arrangements, and beckoned to his steward to place before them the usual beverage, with which all their consultations concluded.

The sailing-master appeared to think that the same order was to be observed in their potations as in council, and, helping himself to an allowance which retained its hue even in its diluted state, he first raised it to the light, and then observed:

"This ship's water is nearly the color of rum itself; if it only had its flavor, what a set of hearty dogs we should be!—Mr. Griffith, I find you are willing to haul your landtacks aboard. Well, it's natural for youth to love the earth; but there is one man, and he is sailing-master of this ship, who saw land enough last night to last him a twelvemonth. But if you will go, here's a good land-fall, and a better offing to you. Captain Munson, my respects to you. I say, sir, if we should keep the ship more to the south'ard, it's my opinion, and that's but one man's, we should fall in with some of the enemy's homeward-bound West Indiamen, and find wherewithal to keep the life in us when we see fit to go ashore ourselves."

As the tough old sailor made frequent

application of the glass to his mouth with one hand, and kept a firm hold of the decanter with the other, during this speech, his companions were compelled to listen to his eloquence or depart with their thirst unassuaged. Barnstable, however, quite coolly dispossessed the tar of the bottle, and mixing for himself a more equal potation, observed in the act:

"That is the most remarkable glass of grog you have, Boltrope, that I ever sailed with; it draws as little water as the *Ariel*, and is as hard to find the bottom. If your spirit-room enjoys the same sort of engine to replenish it as you pump out your rum, Congress will sail this frigate cheaply."

The other officers helped themselves with still greater moderation, Griffith barely moistening his lips, and the pilot rejecting the offered glass altogether. Captain Munson continued standing, and his officers, perceiving that their presence was no longer necessary, bowed and took their leave. As Griffith was retiring last, he felt a hand laid lightly on his shoulder, and turning, perceived that he was detained by the pilot.

"Mr. Griffith," he said, when they were quite alone with the commander of the frigate, "the occurrences of the last night should teach us confidence in each other; without it we go on a dangerous and fruitless errand."

"Is the hazard equal?" returned the youth. "I am known to all to be the man I seem—am in the service of my country—belong to a family, and enjoy a name that is a pledge for my loyalty to the cause of America—and yet I trust myself on hostile ground, in the midst of enemies, with a weak arm and under circumstances where treachery would prove my ruin. Who and what is the man who thus enjoys your confidence, Captain Munson? I ask the question less for myself than for the gallant men who will fearlessly follow wherever I lead."

A shade of dark displeasure crossed the features of the stranger at one part of this speach, and at its close he sank into deep thought. The commander, however, replied:

"There is a show of reason in your question, Mr. Griffith—and yet you are not the man to be told that implicit obedience is what I have a right to expect. I have not your pretensions, sir, by birth or education, and yet Congress have not seen proper to overlook my years and services. I command this frigate——"

"Say no more," interrupted the pilot. "There is reason in his doubts, and they shall be appeased. I like the proud and fearless eye of the young man, and, while he dreads a gibbet from my hands, I will show him how to repose a noble confidence. Read this, sir, and tell me if you distrust me now?"

While the stranger spoke he thrust his hand into the bosom of his dress, and drew forth a parchment, decorated with ribbons, and bearing a massive seal, which he opened and laid on the table before the youth. As he pointed with his finger impressively to different parts of the writing his eye kindled with a look of unusual fire, and there was a faint tinge discernible on his pallid features when he spoke.

"See!" he said, "royalty itself does not hesitate to bear witness in my favor, and that is not a name to occasion dread to an American."

Griffith gazed with wonder at the fair signature of the unfortunate Louis which graced the bottom of the parchment; but when his eye obeyed the signal of the stranger, and rested on the body of the instrument, he started back from the table, and fixing his animated eyes on the pilot he cried, while a glow of fiery courage flitted across his countenance:

"Lead on! I'll follow you to death!"

A smile of gratified exultation struggled around the lips of the stranger, who took the arm of the young man and led him into a state-room, leaving the commander of the frigate standing in his unmoved and quiet manner a spectator of, but hardly an actor in, the scene.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Fierce bounding, forward sprang the ship,
Like a greyhound starting from the slip,
To seize his flying prey." —LORD OF THE ISLES.

ALTHOUGH the subject of the consultation remained a secret with those whose opinions were required, yet enough of the result leaked out among the subordinate officers to throw the whole crew into a state of eager excitement. The rumor spread itself along the decks of the frigate with the rapidity of an alarm, that an expedition was to attempt the shore on some hidden service, dictated by the Congress itself, and conjectures were made respecting its force and destination, with all that interest which might be imagined would exist among the men whose lives or liberties were to abide the issue. A gallant and reckless daring, mingled with the desire of novelty, however, was the prevailing sentiment among the crew, who would have received with cheers the intelligence that their vessel was commanded to force the passage of the united British fleet. A few of the older and more prudent of the sailors were exceptions to this thoughtless hardihood, and one or two, among whom the cockswain of the whale-boat was the most conspicuous, ventured to speak doubtingly of all sorts of land service, as being of a nature never to be attempted by seamen.

Captain Manual had his men paraded in the weather gangway, and after a short address, calculated to inflame their military ardor and patriotism, acquainted them that he required twenty volunteers, which was in truth half their number, for a dangerous service. After a short pause, the company stepped forward, like one man, and announced themselves as ready to follow him to the end of the world. The marine cast a look over his shoulder, at this gratifying declaration, in quest of Barnstable, but, observing that the sailor was occupied with some papers on a distant part of the quarter-deck, he proceeded to make a most impartial division among the candidates for glory, taking care, at the same time, to cull his company in such a manner as to give himself the flower of his men, and, consequently, to leave the ship the refuse.

While this arrangement was taking place, and the crew of the frigate was in this state of excitement, Griffith ascended to the deck, his countenance flushed with unusual enthusiasm, and eyes beaming with a look of animation and gayety that had long been strangers to the face of the young man. He was giving forth the few necessary orders to the seamen he was to take with him from the ship, when Barnstable again motioned him to follow, and led the way once more to the state-room.

"Let the wind blow its pipe out," said the commander of the *Ariel*, when they were seated; "there will be no landing on the eastern coast of England till the sea goes down. But this Kate was made for a sailor's wife! See, Griffith, what a set of signals she has formed, out of her own cunning head."

"I hope your opinion may prove true, and that you may be the happy sailor who is to wed her," returned the other. "The girl has indeed discovered surprising art in this business! Where could she have learned the method and system so well?"

"Where! why, where she learned better things; how to prize a whole-hearted seaman, for instance. Do you think that my tongue was jammed in my mouth all the time we used to sit by the side of the river in Carolina, and that we found nothing to talk about?"

"Did you amuse your mistress with treatises on the art of navigation, and the science of signals?" said Griffith, smiling.

"I answered her questions, Mr. Griffith, as any civil man would to a woman he loved. The girl has as much curiosity as one of my own townswomen who has weathered cape forty without a husband, and her tongue goes like a dog-vane in a calm, first one way and then another. But here is her dictionary. Now own, Griff, in spite of your college learning and sentimentals, that a woman of ingenuity and cleverness is a very good sort of a helpmate."

"I never doubted the merits of Miss Plowden," said the other, with a droll

gravity that often mingled with his deeper feelings, the result of a sailor's habits, blended with native character. "But this indeed surpasses all my expectations! Why, she has, in truth, made a most judicious selection of phrases. 'No. 168.**** indelible;' '169. **** end only with life;' '169.**** I fear yours misleads me;' '171——'"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Barnstable, snatching the book from before the laughing eyes of Griffith; "what folly to throw away our time now on such nonsense! What think you of this expedition to the land?"

"That it may be the means of rescuing the ladies, though it fail in making the prisoners we anticipate."

"But this pilot! you remember that he holds us by our necks and can run us all up to the yard-arm of some English ship whenever he chooses to open his throat at their threats or bribes."

"It would have been better that he should have cast the ship ashore when he had her entangled in the shoals; it would have been our last thought to suspect him of treachery then," returned Griffith. "I follow him with confidence, and must believe that we are safer with him than we should be without him."

"Let him lead to the dwelling of his fox-hunting ministers of state," cried Barnstable, thrusting his book of signals into his bosom; "but here is a chart that will show us the way to the port we wish to find. Let my foot once more touch *terra firma*, and you may write craven against my name if that laughing vixen slips her cable before my eyes, and shoots into the wind's eye again, like a flying-fish chased by a dolphin. Mr. Griffith, we must have the chaplain with us to the shore."

"The madness of love is driving you into the errors of the soldier. Would you lie by to hear sermons with a flying party like ours?"

"Nay, nay, we must lay-to for nothing that is not unavoidable; but there are so many tacks in such a chase, when one has time to breathe, that we might as well spend our leisure in getting that fellow to splice us together. He has a handy way with a prayer-book, and could do the job as well as a bishop, and I should like to be able to say that this is the last time that these two saucy names, which are written at the bottom of this letter, should ever be seen sailing in the company of each other."

"It will not do," said his friend, shaking his head, and endeavoring to force a smile which his feelings suppressed, "it will not do, Richard; we must yield our own inclinations to the service of our country; nor is this pilot a man who will consent to be led from his purpose."

"Then let him follow his purpose alone," cried Barnstable. "There is no human power, always saving my superior officer, that shall keep me from throwing abroad these tiny signals and having a private talk with my dark-eyed Kate. But for a paltry pilot! he may luff and bear away as he pleases, while I shall steer as true as a magnet for that old ruin, where I can bring my eyes to bear on that romantic wing and three smoky vanes. Not that I'll forget my duty; no, I'll help you catch the Englishmen; but, when that is done, hey! for Katherine Plowden and my true love!"

"Hush, madcap! the ward-room holds long ears, and our bulkheads grow thin by wear. I must keep you and myself to our duty. This is no children's game that we play; it seems the commissioners at Paris have thought proper to employ a frigate in the sport!"

Barnstable's gayety was a little repressed by the grave manner of his companion; but after reflecting a moment he started on his feet, and made the usual movements for departure.

"Whither?" asked Griffith, gently detaining his impatient friend.

"To Old Moderate; I have a proposal to make that may remove every difficulty."

"Name it to me, then; I am in his counsel, and may save you the trouble and mortification of a refusal."

"How many of those gentry does he wish to line his cabin with?"

"The pilot has named no less than six,

all men of rank and consideration with the enemy. Two of them are peers, two more belong to the Commons' House of Parliament, one is a general, and the sixth, like ourselves, is a sailor, and holds the rank of captain. They muster at a hunting-seat near the coast, and, believe me, the scheme is not without its plausibility."

"Well, then, there are two apiece for us. You follow the pilot, if you will; but let me sheer off for this dwelling of Colonel Howard, with my cockswain and boat's crew. I will surprise his house, release the ladies, and, on my way back, lay my hands on two of the first lords I fall in with. I suppose, for our business, one is as good as another."

Griffith could not repress a faint laugh, while he replied:

"Though they are said to be each other's peers, there is, I believe, some difference even in the quality of lords. England might thank us for ridding her of some among them. Neither are they to be found, like beggars, under every hedge. No, no, the men we seek must have something better than their nobility to recommend them to our favor. But let us examine more closely into this plan and map of Miss Plowden; something may occur that shall yet bring the place within our circuit, like a contingent duty of the cruise."

Barnstable reluctantly relinquished his own wild plan to the more sober judgment of his friend, and they passed an hour together, inquiring into the practicability, and consulting on the means, of making their public duty subserve the purposes of their private feelings.

The gale continued to blow heavily during the whole of that morning; but towards noon the usual indications of better weather became apparent. During these few hours of inaction in the frigate, the marines, who were drafted for service on the land, moved through the vessel with a busy and stirring air, as if they were about to participate in the glory and danger of the campaign their officers had planned, while the few seamen who were to accompany the expedition steadily paced the deck, with their hands thrust into the bosom of their neat blue jackets, or occasionally stretched toward the horizon, as their fingers traced, for their less experienced shipmates, the signs of an abatement in the gale among the driving clouds. The last lagger among the soldiers had appeared, with his knapsack on his back, in the lee gangway, where his comrades were collected, armed and accoutered for the strife, when Captain Munson ascended to the quarter-deck, accompanied by the stranger and his first lieutenant. A word was spoken by the latter in a low voice to a midshipman, who skipped gaily along the deck, and presently the shrill call of the boatswain was heard, preceding the hoarse cry of:

"Away there, you Tigers, away!"

A smart roll of the drum followed, and the marines paraded, while six seamen who belonged to the cutter that owned so fierce a name, made their preparations for lowering their little bark from the quarter of the frigate into the troubled sea. Everything was conducted in the most exact order, and with a coolness and skill that bade defiance to the turbulence of the angry elements. The marines were safely transported from the ship to the schooner, under the favoring shelter of the former, though the boat appeared, at times, to be seeking the cavities of the ocean, and again to be riding in the clouds, as she passed from one vessel to the other.

At length it was announced that the cutter was ready to receive the officers of the party. The pilot walked aside, and held private discourse for a few moments with the commander, who listened to the sentences with marked and singular attention. When their conference was ended, the veteran bared his gray head to the blasts, and offered his hand to the other with a seaman's frankness, mingled with the deference of an inferior. This compliment was courteously returned by the stranger, who turned quickly on his heel, and directed the attention of those who awaited his movements, by a significant gesture, to the gangway.

"Come, gentlemen, let us go," said

Griffith, starting from a reverie and bowing his hasty compliments to his brethren in arms.

When it appeared that his superiors were ready to enter the boat, the boy, who by nautical courtesy was styled Mr. Merry, and who had been ordered to be in readiness, sprang over the side of the frigate and glided into the cutter with the activity of a squirrel. But the captain of the marines paused, and cast a meaning glance at the pilot, whose place it was to precede him. The stranger, as he lingered on the deck, was examining the aspect of the heavens, and seemed unconscious of the expectations of the soldier, who gave vent to his impatience, after a moment's detention, by saying:

"We wait for you, Mr. Gray."

Aroused by the sound of his name, the pilot glanced his quick eye on the speaker, but, instead of advancing, he gently bent his body, as he again signed toward the gangway with his hand. To the astonishment not only of the soldier, but of all who witnessed this breach of naval etiquette, Griffith bowed low, and entered the boat with the same promptitude as if he were preceding an admiral. Whether the stranger became conscious of his want of courtesy, or was too indifferent to surrounding objects to note occurrences, he immediately followed himself, leaving to the marine the post of honor. The latter, who was distinguished for his skill in all matters of naval or military etiquette, thought proper to apologize at a fitting time to the first-lieutenant for suffering his senior officer to precede him into a boat, but never failed to show a becoming exultation, when he recounted the circumstance, by dwelling on the manner in which he had brought down the pride of the haughty pilot.

Barnstable had been several hours on board his little vessel, which was every way prepared for their reception; and, as soon as the heavy cutter of the frigate was hoisted on her deck, he announced that the schooner was ready to sail. It has been already intimated that the *Ariel* belonged to the smallest class of sea-vessels; and, as the symmetry of her construction reduced even that size in appearance, she was peculiarly well adapted to the sort of service in which she was about to be employed. Notwithstanding her lightness rendered her nearly as buoyant as a cork, and at times she actually seemed to ride on the foam, her low decks were perpetually washed by the heavy seas that dashed against her frail sides, and she tossed and rolled in the hollows of the waves in a manner that compelled even the practiced seamen who trod her decks to move with guarded steps. Still she was trimmed and cleared with an air of nautical neatness and attention that afforded the utmost possible room for her dimensions; and, though in miniature, she wore the trappings of war as proudly as if the metal she bore was of a more fatal and dangerous character. The murderous gun, which, since the period of which we are writing, has been universally adopted in all vessels of inferior size, was then in the infancy of its invention and was known to the American mariner only by reputation, under the appalling name of a "smasher." Of a vast caliber, though short and easily managed, its advantages were even in that early day beginning to be appreciated, and the largest ships were thought to be unusually well provided with the means of offense when they carried two or three cannon of this formidable invention among their armament. At a later day, this weapon has been improved and altered, until its use has become general in vessels of a certain size, taking its appellation from the Carron, on the banks of which river it was first molded. In place of these carronades, six light brass cannon were firmly lashed to the bulwarks of the *Ariel*, their brazen throats blackened by the sea-water, which so often broke harmlessly over these engines of destruction. In the center of the vessel, between her two masts, a gun of the same metal, but of nearly twice the length of the other, was mounted on a carriage of a new and singular construction, which admitted of its being turned in any direction, so as to be of service in most of the emergencies that occur in naval warfare.

The eye of the pilot examined this armament closely, and then turned to the well-ordered decks, the neat and compact rigging, and the hardy faces of the fine young crew, with manifest satisfaction. Contrary to what had been his practice during the short time he had been with them, he uttered his gratification freely and aloud.

"You have a tight boat, Mr. Barnstable," he said, "and a gallant-looking crew. You promise good service, sir, in time of need, and that hour may not be far distant."

"The sooner the better," returned the reckless sailor; "I have not had an opportunity of scaling my guns since we quitted Brest, though we passed several of the enemy's cutters coming up the Channel, with whom our bull-dogs longed for a conversation. Mr. Griffith will tell you, pilot, that my little sixes can speak, on occasions, with a voice nearly as loud as the frigate's eighteens."

"But not to as much purpose," observed Griffith; "'vox et præterea nihil,' as we said at the school."

"I know nothing of your Greek and Latin, Mr. Griffith," retorted the commander of the *Ariel*; "but if you mean that those seven brass playthings won't throw a round shot as far as any gun of their size and height above the water, or won't scatter grape and canister with any blunderbuss in your ship, you may find an opportunity that will convince you to the contrary before we part company."

"They promise well," said the pilot, who was evidently ignorant of the good understanding that existed between the two officers, and wished to conciliate all under his directions; "and I doubt not they will argue the leading points of a combat with good discretion. I see that you have christened them—I suppose for their respective merits! They are indeed expressive names!"

"'Tis the freak of an idle moment," said Barnstable, laughing, as he glanced his eyes to the cannon, above which were painted the several quaint names of "boxer," "plumper," "grinder," "scatterer," "exterminator" and "nail-driver."

"Why have you thrown the mid-ship gun without the pale of your baptism?" asked the pilot; "or do you know it by the usual title of the 'old woman'?"

"No, no, I have no such petticoat terms on board me," cried the other; "but move more to starboard, and you will see its style painted on the cheeks of the carriage; it's a name that need not cause them to blush, either."

"'Tis a singular epithet, though not without some meaning!"

"It has more than you perhaps dream of, sir. That worthy seaman whom you see leaning against the foremast, and who would serve, on occasion, for a spare spar himself, is the captain of that gun, and more than once has decided some warm disputes with John Bull by the manner in which he has wielded it. No marine can trail his musket more easily than my coxswain can train his nine-pounder on an object; and thus from their connection, and some resemblance there is between them in length, it has got the name which you perceive it carries—that of 'Long Tom.'"

The pilot smiled as he listened, but, turning away from the speaker, the deep reflection that crossed his brow but too plainly showed that he trifled only from momentary indulgence; and Griffith intimated to Barnstable that, as the gale was sensibly abating, they would pursue the object of their destination.

Thus recalled to his duty, the commander of the schooner forgot the delightful theme of expatiating on the merits of his vessel, and issued the necessary orders to direct their movements. The little schooner slowly obeyed the impulse of her helm, and fell off before the wind, when the folds of her square sail, though limited by a prudent reef, were opened to the blasts, and she shot away from her consort like a meteor dancing across the waves. The black mass of the frigate's hull soon sunk in the distance; and, long before the sun had fallen below the hills of England, her tall masts were barely distinguishable by the small cloud of sail that held the vessel to her station. As the ship disappeared, the land seemed

to issue out of the bosom of the deep; and so rapid was their progress, that the dwellings of the gentry, the humbler cottages, and even the dim lines of the hedges, became gradually more distinct to the eyes of the bold mariners, until they were beset with the gloom of the evening, when the whole scene faded from their view in the darkness of the hour, leaving only the faint outline of the land visible in the tract before them, and the sullen billows of the ocean raging with appalling violence in their rear.

Still the little *Ariel* held on her way, skimming the ocean like a water-fowl seeking its place of nightly rest, and shooting in toward the land as fearlessly as if the dangers of the preceding night were already forgotten. No shoals or rocks appeared to arrest her course, and we must leave her gliding into the dark streak that was thrown from the high and rocky cliffs that lined a basin of bold entrance, where the mariners often sought and found a refuge from the dangers of the German Ocean.

CHAPTER IX.

"Sirrah! how dare you leave your barley-broth
To come in armor thus, against your king?"
—*Drama.*

THE large irregular building inhabited by Colonel Howard well deserved the name it had received from the pen of Katherine Plowden. Notwithstanding the confusion in its orders, owing to the different ages in which its several parts had been erected, the interior was not wanting in that appearance of comfort which forms the great characteristic of English domestic life. Its dark and intricate mazes of halls, galleries, and apartments, were all well provided with good and substantial furniture; and whatever might have been the purposes of their original construction, they were now peacefully appropriated to the service of a quiet and well-ordered family.

There were divers portentous traditions of cruel separations and blighted loves, which always linger, like cobwebs, around the walls of old houses, to be heard here also, and which, doubtless, in abler hands, might easily have been wrought up into scenes of high interest and delectable pathos. But our humbler efforts must be limited by an attempt to describe man as God has made him, vulgar and unseemly as he may appear to sublimated faculties, to the possessors of which enviable qualifications we desire to say, at once, that we are determined to eschew all things supernaturally refined as we would the devil. To all those, then, who are tired of the company of their species, we would bluntly insinuate, that the sooner they throw aside our pages, and seize upon those of some more highly gifted bard, the sooner will they be in the way of quitting earth, if not of attaining heaven. Our business is solely to treat of man, and this fair scene on which he acts, and that not in his subtleties and metaphysical contradictions, but in his palpable nature, that all may understand our meaning as well as ourselves—whereby we manifestly reject the prodigious advantage of being thought a genius, by perhaps foolishly refusing the mighty aid of incomprehensibility to establish such a character.

Leaving the gloomy shadows of the cliffs, under which the little *Ariel* has been seen to steer, and the sullen roaring of the surf along the margin of the ocean, we shall endeavor to transport the reader to the dining-parlor of St. Ruth's Abbey, taking the evening of the same day as the time for introducing another collection of those personages whose acts and characters it has become our duty to describe.

The room was not of very large dimensions, and every part was glittering with the collected light of half a dozen candles, aided by the fierce rays that glanced from the grate, which held a most cheerful fire of sea-coal. The moldings of the dark oak wainscoting threw back upon the massive table of mahogany streaks of strong light, which played among the rich fluids that were sparkling on the board, in mimic halos. The outline of this picture of comfort was formed by damask curtains of a

deep red, and enormous oak chairs, with leathern backs and cushioned seats, as if the apartment were hermetically sealed against the world and its chilling cares.

Around the table, which still stood in the center of the floor, were seated three gentlemen, in the easy enjoyment of their daily repast. The cloth had been drawn and the bottle was slowly passing among them, as if those who partook of its bounty well knew that neither the time nor the opportunity would be wanting for their deliberate indulgence in its pleasures.

At one end of the table an elderly man was seated, who performed whatever little acts of courtesy the duties of a host would appear to render necessary, in a company where all seemed to be equally at their ease and at home. This gentleman was in the decline of life, though his erect carriage, quick movements, and steady hand, equally denoted that it was an old age free from the usual infirmities. In his dress, he belonged to that class whose members always follow the fashions of the age anterior to the one in which they live, whether from disinclination to sudden changes of any kind, or from the recollections of a period which, with them, has been hallowed by scenes and feelings that the chilling evening of life can neither revive nor equal. Age might possibly have thrown its blighting frosts on his thin locks, but art had labored to conceal the ravages with the nicest care. An accurate outline of powder covered not only the parts where the hair actually remained, but wherever nature had prescribed that hair should grow. His countenance was strongly marked in features, if not in expression, exhibiting, on the whole, a look of noble integrity and high honor, which was a good deal aided in its effect by the lofty, receding forehead, that rose like a monument above the whole, to record the character of the aged veteran. A few streaks of branching red mingled with a swarthiness of complexion that was rendered more conspicuous by the outline of the unsullied white, which nearly surrounded his prominent features.

Opposite to the host, who it will at once be understood was Colonel Howard, was the thin, yellow visage of Mr. Christopher Dillon, that bane to the happiness of her cousin, already mentioned by Miss Plowden.

Between these two gentlemen was a middle-aged, hard-featured man, attired in the livery of King George, whose countenance emulated the scarlet coat, and whose principal employment, at the moment, appeared to consist in doing honor to the cheer of his entertainer.

Occasionally a servent entered or left the room in silence, giving admission, however, through the open door, to the rushing sounds of the gale, as the wind murmured amid the angles and high chimneys of the edifice.

A man, in the dress of a rustic, was standing near the chair of Colonel Howard, between whom and the master of the mansion a dialogue had been maintained, which closed as follows. The colonel was the first to speak, after the curtain is drawn from between the eyes of the reader and the scene.

"Said you, farmer, that the Scotchman beheld the vessel with his own eyes?"

The answer was a simple negative.

"Well, well," continued the colonel, "you can withdraw."

The man made a rude attempt at a bow, which being returned by the old soldier with formal grace, he left the room. The host, turning to his companions, resumed the subject.

"If those rash boys have really persuaded the silly dotard who commands the frigate to trust himself within the shoals on the eve of such a gale as this, their case must have been hopeless indeed! Thus may rebellion and disaffection ever meet with the just indignation of Providence. It would not surprise me, gentlemen, to hear that my native land had been engulfed by earthquakes or swallowed by the ocean, so awful and inexcusable has been the weight of her transgressions! And yet it was a proud and daring boy who held the second station in that ship! I knew his father well, and a gallant gentleman he was, who, like my own brother, the parent of Cecilia,

preferred to serve his master on the ocean rather than on the land. His son inherited the bravery of his high spirit, without its loyalty. One would not wish to have such a youth drowned, either."

This speech, which partook much of the nature of a soliloquy, especially toward its close, called for no immediate reply; but the soldier, having held his glass to the candle, to admire the rosy hue of its contents, and then sipped of the fluid so often that nothing but a clear light remained to gaze at, quietly replaced the empty vessel on the table, and, as he extended an arm toward the blushing bottle, he spoke, in the careless tones of one whose thoughts were dwelling on another theme:

"Ay, true enough, sir; good men are scarce, and, as you say, one cannot but mourn his fate, though his death be glorious; quite a loss to his majesty's service, I dare say, it will prove."

"A loss to the service of his majesty!" echoed the host—"his death glorious! no, Captain Borroughcliffe, the death of no rebel can be glorious; and how he can be a loss to his majesty's service I am myself quite at a loss to understand."

The soldier, whose ideas were in that happy state of confusion that renders it difficult to command the one most needed, but who still, from long discipline, had them under a wonderful control for the disorder of his brain, answered, with great promptitude:

"I mean the loss of this example, sir. It would have been so appalling to others to have seen the young man executed instead of shot in battle."

"He is drowned, sir."

"Ah! that is the next thing to being hanged; that circumstance had escaped me."

"It is by no means certain, sir, that the ship and schooner that the drover saw are the vessels you take them to have been," said Mr. Dillon, in a harsh, drawling tone of voice. "I should doubt their daring to venture so openly on the coast, and in the direct tract of our vessels-of-war."

"These people are our countrymen, Christopher, though they are rebels," exclaimed the colonel. "They are a hardy and brave nation. When I had the honor to serve his majesty, some twenty years since, it was my fortune to face the enemies of my king in a few small affairs, Captain Borroughcliffe; such as the siege of Quebec, and the battle before its gates, a trifling occasion at Ticonderoga, and that unfortunate catastrophe of General Braddock—with a few others. I must say, sir, in favor of the colonists, that they played a manful game on the latter day; and this gentleman who now heads the rebels sustained a gallant name among us for his conduct in that disastrous business. He was a discreet, well-behaved young man, and quite a gentleman. I have never denied that Mr. Washington was very much of a gentleman."

"Yes!" said the soldier, yawning, "he was educated among his majesty's troops, and he could hardly be otherwise. But I am quite melancholy about this unfortunate drowning, Colonel Howard. Here will be an end of my vocation, I suppose; and I am far from denying that your hospitality has made these quarters most agreeable to me."

"Then, sir, the obligation is only mutual," returned the host, with a polite inclination of his head; "but gentlemen who, like ourselves, have been made free of the camp, need not bandy idle compliments about such trifles. If it were my kinsman, Dillon, now, whose thoughts run more on Coke upon Littleton than on the gayeties of a mess-table and a soldier's life, he might think such formalities as necessary as his hard words are to a deed. Come, Borroughcliffe, my dear fellow, I believe we have given an honest glass to each of the royal family (God bless them all!), let us swallow a bumper to the memory of the immortal Wolfe."

"An honest proposal, my gallant host, and such a one as a soldier will never decline," returned the captain, who roused himself with the occasion. "God bless them all! say I, in echo; and if this gracious queen of ours ends as famously as she has begun, 'twill be such a family of

princes as no other army of Europe can brag of around a mess-table."

"Ay, ay, there is some consolation in that thought in the midst of this dire rebellion of my countrymen. But I'll vex myself no more with the unpleasant recollections; the arms of my sovereign will soon purge that wicked land of the foul stain."

"Of that there can be no doubt," said Borroughcliffe, whose thoughts still continued a little obscured by the sparkling Madeira that had long lain ripening under a Carolinian sun; "these Yankees fly before his majesty's regulars like so many dirty clowns in a London mob before a charge of the horse guards."

"Pardon me, Captain Burroughcliffe," said his host, elevating his person to more than its usual erect attitude; "they may be misguided, deluded, and betrayed, but the comparison is unjust. Give them arms, and give them discipline, and he who gets an inch of their land from them, plentiful as it is, will find a bloody day on which to take possession."

"The veriest coward in Christendom would fight in a country where wine brews itself into such a cordial as this," returned the cool soldier. "I am a living proof that you mistook my meaning; for had not those loose-flapped gentlemen they call Vermontese and Hampshire-granters (God grant them his blessing for the deed!) finished two-thirds of my company, I should not have been at this day under your roof, a recruiting instead of a marching officer; neither should I have been bound up in a covenant, like the law of Moses, could Burgoyne have made head against their long-legged marchings and counter-marchings. Sir, I drink their healths, with all my heart; and with such a bottle of golden sunshine before me, rather than displease so good a friend, I will go through Gates's whole army, regiment by regiment, company by company, or, if you insist on the same, even man by man, in a bumper."

"On no account would I tax your politeness so far," returned the colonel, abundantly mollified by this ample concession; "I stand too much your debtor, Captain Borroughcliffe, for so freely volunteering to defend my house against the attacks of my piratical, rebellious and misguided countrymen to think of requiring such a concession."

"Harder duty might be performed, and no favors asked, my respectable host," returned the soldier. "Country quarters are apt to be dull and the liquor is commonly execrable; but in such a dwelling as this a man can rock himself in the very cradle of contentment. And yet there is one subject of complaint that I should disgrace my regiment did I not speak of—for it is incumbent on me, both as a man and a soldier, to be no longer silent."

"Name it, sir, freely, and its cause shall be as freely redressed," said the host, in some amazement.

"Here we three sit from morning to night," continued the soldier, "bachelors all, well provisioned, and better liquored, I grant you, but like so many well-fed anchorites, while two of the loveliest damsels in the island pine in solitude within a hundred feet of us, without tasting the homage of our sighs. This, I will maintain, is a reproach both to your character, Colonel Howard, as an old soldier, and to mine as a young one. As to our old friend Coke on top of Littleton here, I leave him to the quiddities of the law to plead his own cause."

The brow of the host contracted for a moment, and the sallow cheek of Dillon, who had sat during the dialogue in a sullen silence, appeared to grow even livid; but gradually the open brow of the veteran resumed its frank expression, and the lips of the other relaxed into a Jesuitical sort of a smile that was totally disregarded by the captain, who amused himself with sipping his wine while he waited for an answer, as if he analyzed each drop that crossed his palate.

After an embarrassing pause of a moment, Colonel Howard broke the silence.

"There is reason in Borroughcliffe's hint, for such I take it to be——"

"I meant it for a plain, matter-of-fact complaint," interrupted the soldier.

"And you have cause for it," continued

the colonel. "It is unreasonable, Christopher, that the ladies should allow their dread of these piratical countrymen of ours to exclude us from their society, though prudence may require that they remain secluded in their apartments. We owe the respect to Captain Borroughcliffe that at least we admit him to the sight of the coffee-urn in an evening."

"That is precisely my meaning," said the captain; "as for dining with them, why, I am well provided for here; but there is no one knows how to set hot water a-hissing in so professional a manner as a woman. So forward, my dear and honored colonel, and lay your injunctions on them that they command your humble servant and Mr. Coke unto Littleton to advance and give the countersign of gallantry."

Dillon contracted his disagreeable features into something that was intended for a satirical smile before he spoke as follows:

"But the veteran Colonel Howard and the gallant Captain Borroughcliffe may find it easier to overcome the enemies of his majesty in the field than to shake a woman's caprice. Not a day has passed, these three weeks, that I have not sent my inquiries to the door of Miss Howard, as became her father's kinsman, with a wish to appease her apprehensions of the pirates; but little has she deigned me in reply, more than such thanks as her sex and breeding could not well dispense with."

"Well, you have been as fortunate as myself, and why you should be more so I see no reason," cried the soldier, throwing a glance of cool contempt at the other; "fear whitens the cheek, and ladies best love to be seen when the roses flourish rather than the lilies."

"A woman is never so interesting, Captain Borroughcliffe," said the gallant host, "as when she appears to lean on man for support; and he who does not feel himself honored by the trust is a disgrace to his species."

"Bravo! my honored sir, a worthy sentiment, and spoken like a true soldier; but I have heard much of the loveliness of the ladies of the Abbey since I have been in my present quarters, and I feel a strong desire to witness beauty encircled by such loyalty as could induce them to flee their native country, rather than to devote their charms to the rude keeping of the rebels." The colonel looked grave, and for a moment fierce; but the expression of his displeasure soon passed away in a smile of forced gayety, and, as he cheerfully rose from his feet, he cried:

"You shall be admitted this very night, and this instant, Captain Borroughcliffe. We owe it, sir, to your services here, as well as in the field, and those froward girls shall be humored no longer. Nay, it is nearly two weeks since I have seen my ward myself; nor have I laid eyes on my niece but twice in all that time. Christopher, I leave the captain under your good care while I go seek admission into the cloisters; we call that part of the building the cloisters, because it holds our nuns, sir! You will pardon my early absence from the table, Captain Borroughcliffe."

"I beg it may not be mentioned; you leave an excellent representative behind you, sir," cried the soldier, taking in the lank figure of Mr. Dillon in a sweeping glance that terminated with a settled gaze on his decanter. "Make my devoirs to the recluses, and say all that your own excellent wit shall suggest as an apology for my impatience. Mr. Dillon, I meet you in a bumper to their healths, and in their honor."

The challenge was coldly accepted; and while these gentlemen still held their glasses to their lips Colonel Howard left the apartment, bowing low, and uttering a thousand excuses to his guest as he proceeded, and even offering a very unnecessary apology to the same effect to his habitual inmate, Mr. Dillon.

"Is fear so very powerful within these old walls," said the soldier, when the door closed behind their host, "that your ladies deem it necessary to conceal themselves before even an enemy is known to have landed?"

Dillon coldly replied:

"The name of Paul Jones is terrific to all on this coast, I believe; nor are the ladies of St. Ruth singular in their apprehensions."

"Ah! the pirate has bought himself a desperate name since the affair of Flamborough Head. But let him look to't, if he trusts himself in another Whitehaven expedition, while there is a detachment of the ——th in the neighborhood, though the men shall be nothing better than recruits."

"Our last accounts leave him safe in the court of Louis," returned his companion; "but there are men as desperate as himself, who sail the ocean under the rebel flag, and from one or two of them we have had much reason to apprehend the vengeance of disappointed men. It is they that we hope are lost in this gale."

"Hum! I hope they were dastards, or your hopes are a little unchristian, and——"

He would have proceeded, but the door opened, and his orderly entered, and announced that a sentinel had detained three men, who were passing along the highway near the Abbey, and who, by their dress, appeared to be seamen.

"Well, let them pass," cried the captain; "what, have we nothing to do better than to stop passengers, like footpads, on the king's highway? Give them of your canteens, and let the rascals pass! Your orders were to give the alarm if any hostile party landed on the coast, not to detain peaceable subjects on their lawful business."

"I beg your honor's pardon," returned the sergeant; "but these men seemed lurking about the grounds for no good, and as they kept carefully aloof from the place where our sentinel was posted, until to-night, Downing thought it looked suspiciously, and detained them."

"Downing is a fool, and it may go hard with him for his officiousness. What have you done with the men?"

"I took them to the guard-room in the east wing, your honor."

"Then feed them; and hark ye, sirrah! liquor them well, that we hear no complaints, and let them go."

"Yes, sir; yes, your honor shall be obeyed; but there is a straight, soldierly-looking fellow among them, that I think might be persuaded to enlist, if he were detained till morning. I doubt, sir, by his walk, but he has served already."

"Ha! what say you?" cried the captain, pricking up his ears like a hound who hears a well-known cry, "served, think ye, already?"

"There are signs about him, your honor, to that effect. An old soldier is seldom deceived in such a thing; and considering his disguise, for it can be no other, and the place where we took him, there is no danger of a have-us corpses until he is tied to us by the laws of the kingdom."

"Peace, you knave!" said Borroughcliffe, rising and making a devious route toward the door; "you speak in the presence of my lord chief justice that is to be, and should not talk lightly of the laws. But still you say reason; give me your arm, sergeant, and lead the way to the east wing; my eyesight is good for nothing in such a dark night. A soldier should always visit his guard before the tattoo beats."

After emulating the courtesy of their host, Captain Borroughcliffe retired on this patriotic errand, leaning on his subordinate in a style of most familiar condescension. Dillon continued at the table, endeavoring to express the rancorous feelings of his breast by a satirical smile of contempt, that was necessarily lost on all but himself, as a large mirror threw back the image of his morose and unpleasant features.

But we must precede the veteran colonel in his visits to the "cloisters."

CHAPTER X.

——"And kindness like their own
Inspired those eyes, affectionate and glad,
That seemed to love whate'er they looked upon;
Whether with Hebe's mirth her features shone,
Or if a shade more pleasing them o'ercast—
Yet so becomingly th' expression past,
That each succeeding look was lovelier than the last." —GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

THE western wing of St. Ruth house, or abbey, as the building was indiscriminately called, retained but few vestiges of the uses to which it had been originally devoted. The upper apartments were small

and numerous, extending on either side of a long, low, and dark gallery, and might have been the dormitories of the sisterhood who were said to have once inhabited that portion of the edifice; but the ground-floor had been modernized, as it was then called, about a century before, and retained just enough of its ancient character to blend the venerable with what was thought comfortable in the commencement of the reign of the third George. As this wing had been appropriated to the mistress of the mansion, ever since the building had changed its spiritual character for one of a more carnal nature, Colonel Howard continued the arrangement when he became the temporary possessor of St. Ruth, until, in the course of events, the apartments which had been appropriated for the accommodation and convenience of his niece were eventually converted into her prison. But as the severity of the old veteran was as often marked by an exhibition of his virtues as of his foibles, the confinement and his displeasure constituted the sole subjects of complaint that were given to the young lady. That our readers may be better qualified to judge of the nature of their imprisonment, we shall transport them, without further circumlocution, into the presence of the two females, whom they must be already prepared to receive.

The withdrawing-room of St. Ruth's was an apartment which, tradition said, had formerly been the refectory of the little bevy of fair sinners who sought a refuge within its walls from the temptations of the world. Their number was not large, nor their entertainments very splendid, or this limited space could not have contained them. The room, however, was of fair dimensions, and an air of peculiar comfort, mingled with chastened luxury, was thrown around it by the voluminous fold of the blue damask curtains that nearly concealed the sides where the deep windows were placed, and by the dark leathern hangings, richly stamped with cunning devices in gold, that ornamented the two others. Massive couches in carved mahogany, with chairs of a similar material and fashion, all covered by the same rich fabric that composed the curtains, together with a Turkey carpet, over the shaggy surface of which all the colors of the rainbow were scattered in bright confusion, united to relieve the gloomy splendor of the enormous mantel, deep, heavy cornices, and the complicated carvings of the massive woodwork which cumbered the walls. A brisk fire of wood was burning on the hearth, in compliment to the willful prejudice of Miss Plowden, who had maintained, in her most vivacious manner, that sea-coal was "only tolerable for blacksmiths and Englishmen." In addition to the cheerful blaze from the hearth, two waxen lights, in candlesticks of massive silver, were lending their aid to enliven the apartment.

One of these was casting its rays brightly along the confused colors of the carpet on which it stood, flickering before the active movements of the form that played around it with light and animated inflections. The posture of this young lady was infantile in grace, and, with one ignorant of her motives, her employment would have been obnoxious to the same construction. Divers small square pieces of silk, strongly contrasted to each other in color, lay on every side of her, and were changed, as she kneeled on the floor, by her nimble hands, into as many different combinations, as if she was humoring the fancies of her sex, or consulting the shades of her own dark but rich complexion in the shop of a mercer. The close satin dress of this young female served to display her small figure in its true proportions, while her dancing eyes of jet black shamed the dyes of the Italian manufacturer by their superior radiancy. A few ribbons of pink, disposed about her person with an air partly studied, and yet carelessly coquettish, seemed rather to reflect than lend the rich bloom that mantled around her laughing countenance, leaving to the eye no cause to regret that she was not fairer.

Another female figure, clad in virgin white, was reclining on the end of a distant couch. The seclusion in which they

lived might have rendered this female a little careless of her appearance, or, what was more probable, the comb had been found unequal to its burden; for her tresses, which rivaled the hue and gloss of the raven, had burst from their confinement, and dropping over her shoulders, fell along her dress in rich profusion, finally resting on the damask of the couch in dark folds, like glittering silk. A small hand, which seemed to blush at its own naked beauties, supported her head, embedded in the volumes of her hair, like the fairest alabaster set in the deepest ebony. Beneath the dark profusion of her curls, which, notwithstanding the sweeping train that fell about her person, covered the summit of her head, lay a low, spotless forehead of dazzling whiteness, that was relieved by two arches so slightly and truly drawn that they appeared to have been produced by the nicest touches of art. The fallen lids and long silken lashes concealed the eyes that rested on the floor as if their mistress mused in melancholy. The remainder of the features of this maiden were of a kind that is most difficult to describe, being neither regular nor perfect in their several parts, yet harmonizing and composing a whole that formed an exquisite picture of female delicacy and loveliness. There might or there might not have been a tinge of slight red in her cheeks, but it varied with each emotion of her bosom, even as she mused in quiet, now seeming to steal insidiously over her glowing temples, and then leaving her face an almost startling paleness. Her stature, as she reclined, seemed above the medium height of womanhood, and her figure was rather delicate than full, though the little foot that rested on the damask cushion before her displayed a rounded outline that any of her sex might envy.

"Oh! I'm as expert as if I were signal-officer to the lord high admiral of this realm!" exclaimed the laughing female on the floor, clapping her hands together in girlish exultation. "I do long, dear Cecilia, for an opportunity to exhibit my skill."

While her cousin was speaking, Miss Howard raised her head, with a faint smile, and, as she turned her eyes toward the other, a spectator might have been disappointed, but could not have been displeased, by the unexpected change the action produced in the expression of her countenance. Instead of the piercing black eyes that the deep color of her tresses would lead him to expect, he would have beheld two large, mild blue orbs, that seemed to float in a liquid so pure as to be nearly invisible, and which were more remarkable for their tenderness and persuasion than for the vivid flashes that darted from the quick glances of her companion.

"The success of your mad excursion to the seaside, my cousin, has bewildered your brain," returned Cecilia; "but I know not how to conquer your disease, unless we prescribe salt-water for the remedy, as in some other cases of madness."

"Ah! I am afraid your nostrum would be useless," cried Katherine; "it has failed to wash out the disorder from the sedate Mr. Richard Barnstable, who has had the regimen administered to him through many a hard gale, but who continues as fair a candidate for Bedlam as ever. Would you think it, Cicely, the crazy one urged me, in ten minutes' conversation we held together on the cliff, to accept of his schooner as a shower-bath!"

"I can think that your hardihood might encourage him to expect much, but surely he could not have been serious in such a proposal!"

"Oh! to do the wretch justice, he did say something of a chaplain to consecrate the measure, but there was boundless impudence in the thought. I have not, nor shall I forget it, or forgive him for it, these six-and-twenty years. What a fine time he must have had of it, in his little *Ariel*, among the monstrous waves we saw tumbling in upon the shore to-day, coz! I hope they will wash his impudence out of him! I do think the man cannot have a dry thread about him, from sun to sun. I must believe it as a punishment for his boldness, and, be certain, I shall tell him of it. I will form half a dozen

signals this instant to joke at his moist condition, in very revenge."

Pleased with her own thoughts, and buoyant with the secret hope that her adventurous undertaking would be finally crowned with complete success, the gay girl shook her black locks in infinite mirth, and tossed the mimic flags gayly around her person, as she was busied in forming new combinations, in order to amuse herself with her lover's disastrous situation. But the features of her cousin clouded with the thoughts that were excited by her remarks, and she replied, in a tone that bore some little of the accents of reproach:

"Katherine! Katherine! can you jest when there is so much to apprehend? Forget you what Alice Dunscombe told us of the gale this morning, and that she spoke of two vessels, a ship and a schooner, that had been seen venturing with fearful temerity within the shoals, only six miles from the Abbey, and that, unless God in His gracious providence has been kind to them, there was but little doubt that their fate would be a sad one? Can you, that know so well who and what these daring mariners are, be merry about the self-same winds that cause their danger?"

The thoughtless, laughing girl was recalled to her recollection by this remonstrance, and every trace of mirth vanished from her countenance, leaving a momentary death-like paleness crossing her face, as she clasped her hands before her, and fastened her keen eyes vacantly on the splendid pieces of silk that now lay unheeded around her. At this critical moment the door of the room slowly opened, and Colonel Howard entered the apartment with an air that displayed a droll mixture of stern indignation with a chivalric and habitual respect to the sex.

"I solicit your pardon, young ladies, for the interruption," he said; "I trust, however, that an old man's presence can never be entirely unexpected in the drawing-room of his wards."

As he bowed, the colonel seated himself on the end of the couch, opposite to the place where his niece had been reclining, for Miss Howard had risen at his entrance and continued standing until her uncle had comfortably disposed of himself. Throwing a glance which was not entirely free from self-condemnation around the comfortable apartment, the veteran proceeded, in the same tone as before:

"You are not without the means of making any guest welcome, nor do I see the necessity of such constant seclusion from the eyes of the world as you thus rigidly practice."

Cecelia looked timidly at her uncle, with surprise, before she returned an answer to his remark.

"We certainly owe much to your kind attention, dear sir," she at length uttered; "but is our retirement altogether voluntary?"

"How can it be otherwise! are you not mistress of this mansion? In selecting the residence where your—and, permit me to add, my ancestors, so long dwelt in credit and honor, I have surely been less governed by any natural pride that I might have entertained on such a subject, than by a desire to consult your comfort and happiness. Everything appears to my aged eyes as if we ought not to be ashamed to receive our friends within these walls. The cloisters of St. Ruth, Miss Howard, are not entirely bare, neither are their tenants wholly unworthy to be seen."

"Open then the portals of the Abbey, sir, and your niece will endeavor to do the proper credit to the hospitality of its master."

"That was spoken like Harry Howard's daughter, frankly and generously!" cried the old soldier, insensibly edging himself nearer to his niece. "If my brother had devoted himself to the camp, instead of the sea, Cecilia, he would have made one of the bravest and ablest generals in his majesty's service — poor Harry! He might have been living at this very day, and at this moment leading the victorious troops of his sovereign through the revolted colonies in triumph. But he is gone, Cicely, and has left you behind him as his dear representative, to perpetuate our family, and to possess what little has been left to us from the ravages of the times."

"Surely, dear sir," said Cecilia, taking

his hand, which had unconsciously approached her person, and pressing it to her lips, "we have no cause to complain of our lot in respect to fortune, though it may cause us bitter regret that so few of us are left to enjoy it."

"No, no, no," said Katherine, in a low, hurried voice; "Alice Dunscombe is and must be wrong; Providence would never abandon brave men to so cruel a fate!"

"Alice Dunscombe is here to atone for her error, if she has fallen into one," said a quiet subdued voice, in which the accents of a provincial dialect, however, were slightly perceptible, and which, in its low tones, wanted that silvery clearness that gave so much feminine sweetness to the words of Miss Howard, and which even rang melodiously in the ordinarily vivacious strains of her cousin.

The surprise created by these sudden interruptions caused a total suspension of the discourse. Katherine Plowden, who had continued kneeling in the attitude before described, arose, and, as she looked about her in momentary confusion, the blood again mantled her face with the fresh and joyous springs of life. The other speaker advanced steadily into the middle of the room; and after returning, with steady civility, the low bow of Colonel Howard, seated herself on the opposite couch. The manner of her entrance, her reception, and her attire, sufficiently denoted that the presence of this female was neither unusual nor unwelcome. She was dressed with marked simplicity, though with a studied neatness, that more than compensated for the absence of ornaments. Her age might not have much exceeded thirty, but there was an adoption of customs in her attire that indicated she was not unwilling to be thought older. Her fair flaxen hair was closely confined by a dark bandeau, such as was worn in a nation farther north by virgins only, over which a few curls strayed in a manner that showed the will of their mistress alone restrained their luxuriance. Her light complexion had lost much of its brilliancy, but enough still remained to assert its original beauty and clearness. To this description might be added fine, mellow, blue eyes; beautifully white, though large teeth; a regular set of features, and a person that was clad in a dark lead-colored silk, which fitted her full but gracefully-molded form with the closest exactness.

Colonel Howard paused a moment after this lady was seated, and then turning himself to Katherine with an air that became stiff and constrained by attempting to seem extremely easy, he said:

"You no sooner summon Miss Alice, but she appears, Miss Plowden — ready and (I am bold to say, Miss Alice) able to defend herself against all charges that her worst enemies can allege against her."

"I have no charges to make against Miss Dunscombe," said Katherine, pettishly, "nor do I wish to have dissensions created between me and my friends, even by Colonel Howard."

"Colonel Howard will studiously avoid such offenses in future," said the veteran, bowing; and turning stiffly to the others, he continued: "I was just conversing with my niece as you entered, Miss Alice, on the subject of her immuring herself like one of the veriest nuns who ever inhabited these cloisters. I tell her, madam, that neither her years nor my fortune, nor, indeed, her own—for the child of Harry Howard was not left penniless—require that we should live as if the doors of the world were closed against us, or there was no other entrance to St. Ruth's but through those antiquated windows. Miss Plowden, I feel it to be my duty to inquire why those pieces of silk are provided in such an unusual abundance and in so extraordinary a shape?"

"To make a gala dress for the ball you are about to give, sir," said Katherine, with a saucy smile that was only checked by the reproachful glance of her cousin. "You have taste in a lady's attire, Colonel Howard; will not this bright yellow form a charming relief to my brown face, while this white and black relieve one another, and this pink contrasts so sweetly with black eyes? Will not the whole form a turban fit for an empress to wear?"

As the arch maiden prattled on in this

unmeaning manner, her rapid fingers entwined the flags in a confused mass, which she threw over her head in a form not unlike the ornament for which she intimated it was intended. The veteran was by far too polite to dispute a lady's taste, and he renewed the dialogue with his slightly awakened suspicion completely quieted by her dexterity and artifice. But although it was not difficult to deceive Colonel Howard in matters of female dress, the case was very different with Alice Dunscombe. This lady gazed with a steady eye and reproving countenance on the fantastical turban, until Katherine threw herself by her side, and endeavored to lead her attention to other subjects by her playful motions and whispered questions.

"I was observing, Miss Alice," continued the colonel, "that, although the times had certainly inflicted some loss on my estate, yet we were not so much reduced as to be unable to receive our friends in a manner that would not disgrace the descendants of the ancient possessors of St. Ruth. Cecilia, here, my brother Harry's daughter, is a young lady that any uncle might be proud to exhibit, and I would have her, madam, show your English dames that we rear no unworthy specimens of the parent stock on the other side of the Atlantic."

"You have only to declare your pleasure, my good uncle," said Miss Howard, "and it shall be executed."

"Tell us how we can oblige you, sir," continued Katherine, "and if it be in any manner that will relieve the tedium of this dull residence, I promise you at least one cheerful assistant to your scheme."

"You speak fair," cried the colonel, "and like two discreet and worthy girls. Well, our first step shall be to send a message to Dillon and the captain, and invite them to attend your coffee. I see the hour approaches."

Cecilia made no reply, but looked distressed and dropped her mild eyes to the carpet; but Miss Plowden took it upon herself to answer.

"Nay, sir, that would be for them to proceed in the matter; as your proposal was that the first step should be ours, suppose we all adjourn to your part of the house, and do the honors of the tea-table in your drawing-room instead of our own? I understand, sir, that you have had an apartment fitted up for that purpose in some style: a woman's tastes might aid your designs, however."

"Miss Plowden, I believe I intimated to you some time since," said the displeased colonel, "that so long as certain suspicious vessels were known to hover on this coast, I should desire that you and Miss Howard would confine yourselves to this wing."

"Do not say that we confine ourselves," said Katherine; "but let it be spoken in plain English, that you confine us here."

"Am I a jailer, madam, that you apply such epithets to my conduct? Miss Alice must form strange conclusions of our manners, if she receives her impressions from your very singular remarks. I——"

"All measures adopted from a dread of the ship and schooner that ran within the Devil's Grip yester-eve may be dispensed with now," interrupted Miss Dunscombe, in a melancholy, reflecting tone. "There are few living who know the dangerous paths that can conduct even the smallest craft in safety from the land, with daylight and fair winds; but when darkness and adverse gales oppose them, their chance for safety lies wholly in God's kindness."

"There is truly much reason to believe they are lost," returned the veteran, in a voice in which no exultation was apparent.

"They are not lost!" exclaimed Katherine, with startling energy, leaving her seat and walking across the room to join Cecilia, with an air that seemed to elevate her little figure to the height of her cousin. "They are skillful and they are brave, and what gallant sailors can do will they do, and successfully; besides, in what behalf would a just Providence sooner exercise its merciful power than to protect the daring children of an oppressed country, while contending against tyranny and countless wrongs?"

The conciliating disposition of the colonel deserted him, as he listened. His own

black eyes sparkled with a vividness unusual for his years, and his courtesy barely permitted the lady to conclude, ere he broke forth:

"What sin, madam, what damning crime, would sooner call down the just wrath of Heaven on the transgressors, than the act of foul rebellion? It was this crime, madam, that deluged England in blood in the reign of the first Charles; it is this crime that has dyed more fields red than all the rest of man's offenses united; it has been visited on our race as a condign punishment, from the days of the deservedly devoted Absalom down to the present time; in short, it lost Heaven forever to some of the most glorious of its angels, and there is much reason to believe that it is the one unpardonable sin named in the holy gospels."

"I know not that you have authority for believing it to be the heavy enormity that you mention, Colonel Howard," said Miss Dunscombe, anticipating the spirited reply of Katherine, and willing to avert it; she hesitated an instant, and then drawing a heavy, shivering sigh, she continued in a voice that grew softer as she spoke: "'tis indeed a crime of magnitude and one that throws the common backslidings of our lives, speaking by comparison, into the sunshine of his favor. Many there are who sever the dearest ties of this life, by madly rushing into its sinful vortex: for I fain think the heart grows hard with the sight of human calamity, and becomes callous to the miseries its owner inflicts; especially where we act the wrongs on our own kith and kin, regardless who or how many that are dear to us suffer by our evil deeds. It is, besides, Colonel Howard, a dangerous temptation to one little practiced in the great world, to find himself suddenly elevated into the seat of power; and if it do not lead to the commission of great crimes, it surely prepares the way to it, by hardening the heart."

"I hear you patiently, Miss Alice," said Katherine, dancing her little foot in affected coolness; "for you neither know of whom nor to whom you speak. But Colonel Howard has not that apology.—Peace, Cecilia, for I must speak! Believe them not, dear girl; there is not a wet hair on their heads. For you, Colonel Howard, who must recollect that the sister's son of the mothers of both your niece and myself is on board that frigate there is an appearance of cruelty in using such language."

"I pity the boy! from my soul I pity him!" exclaimed the veteran; "he is a child, and has followed the current that is sweeping our unhappy colonies down the tide of destruction. But there are others in that vessel who have no excuse of ignorance to offer. There is a son of my old acquaintance, and the bosom friend of my brother Harry, Cecilia's father, dashing Hugh Griffith, as we called him. The urchins left home together, and were rated on board one of his majesty's vessels on the same day. Poor Harry lived to carry a broad pennant in the service, and Hugh died in command of a frigate. This boy, too! he was nurtured on board his father's vessel, and learned, from his majesty's discipline, how to turn his arms against his king. There is something shockingly unnatural in that circumstance, Miss Alice; 'tis the child inflicting a blow on the parent. 'Tis such men as these, with Washington at their head, who maintain the bold front that this rebellion wears."

"There are men, who have never worn the servile livery of Britain, sir, whose names are as fondly cherished in America as any that she boasts of," said Katherine, proudly; "ay, sir, and those who would gladly oppose the bravest officers in the British fleet."

"I contend not against your misguided reason," said Colonel Howard, rising with cool respect. "A young lady who ventures to compare rebels with gallant gentlemen engaged in their duty to their prince, cannot escape the imputation of possessing a misguided reason. No man—I speak not of women, who cannot be supposed so well versed in human nature—but no man who has reached the time of life that entitles him to be called by that name, can consort with these disorganizers, who would destroy everything that

is sacred—these levelers, who would pull down the great to exalt the little—these Jacobins, who—who——"

"Nay, sir, if you are at a loss for opprobrious epithets," said Katherine, with provoking coolness, "call on Mr. Christopher Dillon for assistance; he waits your pleasure at the door."

Colonel Howard turned in amazement, forgetting his angry declamations at this unexpected intelligence, and beheld in reality the somber visage of his kinsman, who stood holding the door in his hand, apparently as much surprised at finding himself in the presence of the ladies as they themselves could be at his unusual visit.

CHAPTER XI.

"Prithee, Kate, let's stand aside, and see the end of this controversy."—SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the warm discussions of the preceding chapter, Miss Howard had bowed her pale face to the arm of the couch, and sat an unwilling and distressed listener to the controversy; but now that another, and one whom she thought an unauthorized intruder on her privacy was announced, she asserted the dignity of her sex as proudly, though with something more of discretion, than her cousin could possibly have done. Rising from her seat she inquired:

"To what are we indebted for so unexpected a visit from Mr. Dillon? Surely he must know that we are prohibited going to the part of the dwelling where he resides, and I trust Colonel Howard will tell him that common justice requires we should be permitted to be private."

The gentleman replied, in a manner in which malignant anger was sufficiently mingled with calculating humility:

"Miss Howard will think better of my intrusion when she knows that I come on business of importance to her uncle."

"Ah! that may alter the case, Kit; but the ladies must have the respect that is due to their sex. I forgot, somehow, to have myself announced; but that Borroughcliffe leads me deeper into my Madeira than I have been accustomed to go since the time when my poor brother Harry, with his worthy friend, Hugh Griffith—the devil seize Hugh Griffith and all his race—your pardon, Miss Alice—what is your business with me, Mr. Dillon?"

"I bear a message from Captain Borroughcliffe. You may remember that, according to your suggestions, the sentinels were to be changed every night, sir."

"Ay! ay! we practiced that in our campaign against Montcalm; 'twas necessary to avoid the murders of their Indians, who were sure, Miss Alice, to shoot down a man at his post, if he were placed two nights running in the same place."

"Well, sir, your prudent precautions have not been thrown away," continued Dillon, moving farther into the apartment, as if he felt himself becoming a more welcome guest as he proceeded; "the consequences are, that we have already made three prisoners."

"Truly it has been a most politic scheme!" exclaimed Katherine Plowden, with infinite contempt. "I suppose, as Mr. Christopher Dillon applauds it so highly, that it has some communion with the law! and that the redoubtable garrison of St. Ruth are about to reap the high glory of being most successful thief-takers!"

The sallow face of Dillon actually became livid as he replied, and his whole frame shook with the rage he vainly endeavored to suppress.

"There may be a closer communion with the law, and its ministers, perhaps, than Miss Plowden can desire," he said; "for rebellion seldom finds favor in any Christian code."

"Rebellion!" exclaimed the colonel; "and what has this detention of three vagabonds to do with rebellion, Kit? Has the damnable poison found its way across the Atlantic?—your pardon, Miss Alice—but this is a subject on which you can feel with me; I know your sentiments on the allegiance that is due to our anointed sovereign. Speak, Mr. Dillon,

are we surrounded by another set of demons? If so, we must give ourselves to the work, and rally round our prince for this island is the main pillar of this throne."

"I cannot say that there is any appearance, at present, of an intention to rise in this island," said Dillon, with demure gravity; "though the riots in London warrant any precautionary measures on the part of his majesty's ministers, even to a suspension of the *habeas corpus*. But you have had your suspicions concerning two certain vessels that have been threatening the coast, for several days past, in a most piratical manner?"

The little foot of Katherine played rapidly on the splendid carpet, but she contented herself with bestowing a glance of the most sovereign contempt on the speaker, as if she disdained any further reply. With the colonel, however, this was touching a theme that lay nearest his heart, and he answered in a manner worthy of the importance of the subject:

"You speak like a sensible man and a loyal subject, Mr. Dillon. The *habeas corpus*, Miss Alice, was obtained in the reign of King John, along with Magna Charta, for the security of the throne, by his majesty's barons; some of my own blood were of the number, which alone would be a pledge that the dignity of the crown was properly consulted. As to our piratical countrymen, Christopher, there is much reason to think that the vengeance of an offended Providence has already reached them; [illegible] who know the coast well tell me, that without a better pilot than an enemy would be likely to procure it would be impossible for any vessel to escape the shoals among which they entered, on a dark night, and with an adverse gale; the morning has arrived, and they are not to be seen?"

"But be they friends, or be they enemies, sir," continued Dillon respectfully, "there is much reason to think that we have now in the Abbey those who can tell us something of their true character; for the men we have detained carry with them the appearance of having just landed, and wear not only the dress, but the air of seamen."

"Of seamen?" echoed Katherine, a deadly paleness chasing from her cheek the bloom which indignation had heightened.

"Of seamen, Miss Plowden," repeated Dillon, with malignant satisfaction, but concealing it under an air of submissive respect.

"I thank you, sir, for so gentle a term," replied the young lady, recollecting herself, and recovering her presence of mind in the same instant; "the imagination of Mr. Dillon is so apt to conjure the worst that he is entitled to our praise for so far humoring our weakness as not to alarm us with the apprehensions of their being pirates."

"Nay, madam, they may yet deserve that name," returned the other, coldly; "but my education has instructed me to hear the testimony before I pronounce sentence."

"Ah! that the boy has found in his Coke upon Littleton," cried the colonel; "the law is a salutary corrective to human infirmities, Miss Alice; and among other things, it teaches patience to a hasty temperament. But for this cursed, unnatural rebellion, madam, the young man would at this moment have been diffusing its blessings from a judicial chair in one of the colonies—ay! and I pledge myself to all alike, black and white, red and yellow, with such proper distinctions as Nature has made between the officer and the private. Keep a good heart, kinsman; we shall yet find a time; the royal arms have many hands, and things look better at the last advices. But come, we will proceed to the guard-room, and put these stragglers to the question; run away, I'll venture to predict, from one of his majesty's cruisers, or, perhaps, honest subjects engaged in supplying the service with men. Come, Kit, come, let us go and——"

"Are we then to lose the company of Colonel Howard so soon?" said Katherine, advancing to her guardian, with an air of blandishment and pleasantry. "I know that he too soon forgets the hasty language of our little disputes to part in anger, if, indeed, he will even quit us till he has tasted of our coffee."

The veteran turned to the speaker of this unexpected address, and listened with profound attention. When she had done, he replied with a good deal of softness in his tones:

"Ah! provoking one! you know me too well to doubt my forgiveness: but duty must be attended to, though even a young lady's smiles tempt me to remain. Yes, yes, child—you, too, are the daughter of a very brave and worthy seaman; but you carry your attachment to that profession too far, Miss Plowden—you do, indeed you do."

Katherine might have faintly blushed; but the slight smile which mingled with the expression of her shame gave to her countenance a look of additional archness, and she laid her hand lightly on the sleeve of her guardian, to detain him, as she replied:

"Yet why leave us, Colonel Howard? It is long since we have seen you in the cloisters, and you know you come as a father; tarry, and you may yet add confessor to the title."

"I know thy sins already, girl," said the worthy colonel, unconsciously yielding to her gentle efforts to lead him back to his seat; "they are, deadly rebellion in your heart to your prince, a most inveterate propensity to salt-water, and a great disrespect to the advice and wishes of an old fellow whom your father's will and the laws of the realm have made the guardian of your person and fortune."

"Nay, say not the last, dear sir," cried Katherine; "for there is not a syllable you have ever said to me on that foolish subject that I have forgotten. Will you resume your seat again? Cecilia, Colonel Howard consents to take his coffee with us."

"But you forget the three men, honest Kit, there, and our respectable guest, Captain Borroughcliffe."

"Let honest Kit stay there, if he please; you may send a request to Captain Borroughcliffe to join our party; I have a woman's curiosity to see the soldier; and as for the three men——" she paused, and affected to muse a moment, when she continued, as if struck by an obvious thought: "yes, and the men can be brought in and examined here; who knows but they may have been wrecked in the gale, and need our pity and assistance, rather than deserve your suspicions?"

"There is a solemn warning in Miss Plowden's conjecture, that should come home to the breasts of all who live on this wild coast," said Alice Dunscombe; "I have known many a sad wreck among the hidden shoals, and when the wind has blown but a gentle gale compared to last night's tempest. The wars, and the uncertainties of the times, together with man's own wicked passions, have made great havoc with those who know well the windings of the channels among the 'Ripples.' Some there were who could pass, as I have often heard, within a fearful distance of the 'Devil's Grip,' the darkest night that ever shadowed England; but all are now gone of that daring set, either by the hand of death, or, what is even as mournful, by unnatural banishment from the land of their fathers."

"This war has then probably drawn off most of them, for your recollections must be quite recent. Miss Alice," said the veteran; "as many of them were engaged in the business of robbing his majesty's revenue the country is in some measure requited for the former depredations by their present services, and at the same time it is happily rid of their presence. Ah! madam, ours is a glorious constitution, where things are so nicely balanced, that, as in the physical organization of a healthy, vigorous man, the baser parts are purified in the course of things by its own wholesome struggles."

The pale features of Alice Dunscombe became slightly tinged with red as the colonel proceeded, nor did the faint glow entirely leave her pallid face until she had said:

"There might have been some who knew not how to respect the law of the land, for such are never wanting; but there are others who, however guilty they might be in many respects, need not charge themselves with that mean crime, and yet who could find the passages that lie hid from common eyes beneath the rude waves as

well as you could find the way through the halls and galleries of the Abbey with a noonday sun shining upon its vanes and high chimneys."

"Is it your pleasure, Colonel Howard, that we examine the three men and ascertain whether they belong to the number of these gifted pilots?" said Christopher Dillon, who was growing uneasy at his awkward situation, and who hardly deemed it necessary to conceal the look of contempt which he cast at the mild Alice while he spoke; "perhaps we may gather information enough from them to draw a chart of the coast that may gain us credit with my lords of the Admiralty."

This unprovoked attack on their unresisting and unoffending guest brought the rich blood to the very temples of Miss Howard, who rose and addressed herself to her kinsman with a manner that could not easily be mistaken any more than it could be condemned:

"If Mr. Dillon will comply with the wishes of Colonel Howard, as my cousin has expressed them, we shall not, at least, have to accuse ourselves of unnecessarily detaining men who probably are more unfortunate than guilty."

When she concluded, Cecilia walked across the apartment and took a seat by the side of Alice Dunscombe, with whom she began to converse in a low, soothing tone of voice. Mr. Dillon bowed with a deprecating humility, and having ascertained that Colonel Howard chose to give an audience, where he sat, to the prisoners, he withdrew to execute his mission, secretly exulting at any change that promised to lead to a renewal of an intercourse that might terminate more to his advantage than the lofty beauty whose favor he courted was, at present, disposed to concede.

"Christopher is a worthy, serviceable good fellow," said the colonel, when the door closed, "and I hope to live yet to see him clad in ermine. I would not be understood literally, but figuratively; for furs would but ill comport with the climate of the Carolinas. I trust I am to be consulted by his majesty's ministers when the new appointments shall be made for the subdued colonies, and he may safely rely on my good word being spoken in his favor. Would he not make an excellent and independent ornament of the bench, Miss Plowden?"

Katherine compressed her lips a little as she replied:

"I must profit by his own discreet rules, and see testimony to that effect, before I decide, sir. But listen!" The young lady's color changed rapidly, and her eyes became fixed in a sort of feverish gaze on the door. "He has at least been active; I hear the heavy tread of men already approaching."

"Ah! it is he certainly; justice ought always to be prompt as well as certain to make it perfect; like a drum-head court-martial, which, by-the-way, is as summary a sort of government as heart could wish to live under. If his majesty's ministers could be persuaded to introduce into the revolted colonies——"

"Listen!" interrupted Katherine, in a voice which bespoke her deep anxiety; "they draw near!"

The sound of footsteps was, in fact, now so audible as to induce the colonel to suspend the delivery of his plan for governing the recovered provinces. The long, low gallery, which was paved with a stone flagging, soon brought the footsteps of the approaching party more distinctly to their ears, and presently a low tap at the door announced their arrival. Colonel Howard arose, with the air of one who was to sustain the principal character in the ensuing interview, and bade them enter. Cecilia and Alice Dunscombe merely cast careless looks at the opening door, indifferent to the scene; but the quick eye of Katherine embraced, at a glance, every figure in the group. Drawing a long, quivering breath, she fell back on the couch, and her eyes again lighted with their playful expression as she hummed a low, rapid air, with a voice in which even the suppressed tones were liquid melody.

Dillon entered, preceding the soldier, whose gait had become more steady, and in whose rigid eye a thoughtful expression had taken the place of its former vacant

gaze. In short, something had manifestly restored to him a more complete command of his mental powers, although he might not have been absolutely sobered. The rest of the party continued in the gallery, while Mr. Dillon presented the renovated captain to the colonel, where the latter did him the same kind office with the ladies.

"Miss Plowden," said the veteran, for she offered first in the circle, "this is my friend Captain Borroughcliffe; he has long been ambitious of this honor, and I have no doubt his reception will be such as to leave him no cause to repent he has been at last successful."

Katherine smiled, and answered with ambiguous emphasis:

"I know not how to thank him sufficiently for the care he has bestowed on our poor persons."

The soldier looked steadily at her for a moment, with an eye that seemed to threaten a retaliation in kind, ere he replied:

"One of those smiles, madam, would be an ample compensation for services that are more real than such as exist only in intention."

Katherine bowed with more complacency than she usually bestowed on those who wore the British uniform; and they proceeded to the next.

"This is Miss Alice Dunscombe, Captain Borroughcliffe, daughter of a worthy clergyman who was formerly the curate of this parish, and a lady who does us the pleasure of giving us a good deal of her society, though far less than we all wish for."

The captain returned the civil inclination of Alice, and the colonel proceeded:

"Miss Howard, allow me to present Captain Borroughcliffe, a gentleman who, having volunteered to defend St. Ruth in these critical times, merits all the favor of its mistress."

Cecilia gracefully rose and received her guest with sweet complacency. The soldier made no reply to the customary compliments that she uttered, but stood an instant gazing at her speaking countenance, and then laying his hand involuntarily on his breast, bowed nearly to his sword-hilt.

These formalities duly observed, the colonel declared his readiness to receive the prisoners. As the door was opened by Dillon, Katherine cast a cool and steady look at the strangers, and beheld the light glancing along the arms of the soldiers who guarded them. But the seamen entered alone; while the rattling of arms and the heavy dash of the muskets on the stone pavement announced that it was thought prudent to retain a force at hand to watch these secret intruders on the grounds of the Abbey.

CHAPTER XII.

"Food for powder, they'll fill a pit as well as better."
—FALSTAFF.

THE three men who now entered the apartment appeared to be nothing daunted by the presence into which they were ushered, though clad in the coarse and weather-beaten vestments of seamen who had been exposed to recent and severe duty. They silently obeyed the directions of the soldier's finger and took their stations in a distant corner of the room, like men who knew the deference due to rank, at the same time that the habits of their lives had long accustomed them to encounter the vicissitudes of the world. With this slight preparation Colonel Howard began the business of examination.

"I trust ye are all good and loyal subjects," the veteran commenced, with a considerate respect for innocence, "but the times are such that even the most worthy characters become liable to suspicion, and, consequently, if our apprehensions should prove erroneous, you must overlook the mistake, and attribute it to the awful condition into which rebellion has plunged this empire. We have much reason to fear that some project is about to be undertaken on the coast by the enemy, who has appeared, we know, with a frigate and schooner; and the audacity of the rebels is only equaled by their

shameless and wicked disrespect for the rights of the sovereign."

While Colonel Howard was uttering his apologetic preamble, the prisoners fastened their eyes on him with much interest; but when he alluded to the apprehended attack, the gaze of two of them became more keenly attentive, and, before he concluded, they exchanged furtive glances of deep meaning. No reply was made, however, and after a short pause, as if to allow time for his words to make a proper impression, the veteran continued:

"We have no evidence, I understand, that you are in the smallest degree connected with the enemies of this country; but as you have been found out of the king's highway, or, rather, on a by-path, which I must confess is frequently used by the people of the neighborhood, but which is nevertheless nothing but a by-path, it becomes no more than what self-preservation requires of us to ask you a few such questions as I trust will be satisfactorily answered. To use your own nautical phrases, 'From whence came ye, pray?' and 'whither are ye bound?'"

A low, deep voice replied:

"From Sunderland last, and bound overland to Whitehaven."

This simple and direct answer was hardly given, before the attention of the listeners was called to Alice Dunscombe, who uttered a faint shriek and rose from her seat involuntarily, while her eyes seemed to roll fearfully and perhaps a little wildly round the room.

"Are you ill, Miss Alice?" said the sweet, soothing tones of Cecilia Howard; "you are, indeed you are; lean on me, that I may lead you to your apartment."

"Did you hear it, or was it only fancy?" she answered, her cheek blanched to the whiteness of death, and her whole frame shuddering as if in convulsions; "say, did you hear it, too?"

"I have heard nothing but the voice of my uncle, who is standing near you anxious, as we all are, for your recovery from this dreadful agitation."

Alice still gazed wildly from face to face. Her eye did not rest satisfied with dwelling on those who surrounded her, but surveyed, with a sort of frantic eagerness, the figures and appearance of the three men, who stood in humble patience, the silent and unmoved witnesses of this extraordinary scene. At length she veiled her eyes with both her hands, as if to shut out some horrid vision, and then, removing them, she smiled languidly as she signed for Cecilia to assist her from the room. To the polite and assiduous offers of the gentlemen she returned no other thanks than those conveyed in her looks and gestures; but when the sentinels who paced the gallery were passed, and the ladies were alone, she breathed a long, shivering sigh, and found an utterance.

"'Twas like a voice from the silent grave!" she said; "but it could be no more than mockery. No, no, 'tis a just punishment for letting the image of the creature fill the place that should be occupied only with the Creator. Ah! Miss Howard, Miss Plowden, ye are both young—in the pride of your beauty and loveliness—but little do ye know, and less do ye dread, the temptations and errors of a sinful world."

"Her thoughts wander!" whispered Katherine, with anxious tenderness; "some awful calamity has affected her intellect!"

"Yes, it must be; my sinful thoughts have wandered and conjured sounds that it would have been dreadful to hear in truth, and within these walls," said Alice, more composedly, smiling with a ghastly expression, as she gazed at the two beautiful solicitous maidens who supported her yielding person. "But the moment of weakness is passed, and I am better; aid me to my room, and return, that you may not interrupt the reviving harmony between yourselves and Colonel Howard. I am now better—nay, I am quite restored."

"Say not so, dear Miss Alice," returned Cecilia; "your face denies what your kindness to us induces you to utter; ill, very ill, you are, nor shall even your own commands induce me to leave you."

"Remain then," said Miss Dunscombe, bestowing a look of grateful affection on her lovely supporter; "and while our Katherine returns to the drawing-room,

to give the gentlemen their coffee, you shall continue with me, as my gentle nurse."

By this time they had gained the apartment, and Katherine, after assisting her cousin to place Alice on her bed, returned to do the honors of the drawing-room.

Colonel Howard ceased his examination of the prisoners at her entrance to inquire, with courtly solicitude, after the invalid; and, when his questions were answered, he again proceeded as follows:

"This is what the lads would call plain sailing, Borroughcliffe: they are out of employment in Sunderland, and have acquaintances and relatives in Whitehaven, to whom they are going for assistance and labor. All very probable, and perfectly harmless."

"Nothing more so, my respectable host," returned the jocund soldier; "but it seemeth a grievous misfortune that a trio of such flesh and blood should need work wherewithal to exercise their thews and sinews while so many of the vessels of his majesty's fleet navigate the ocean in quest of the enemies of Old England."

"There is truth in that; much truth in your remark," cried the colonel. "What say you, my lads, will you fight the Frenchmen and the Don—ay! and even my own rebellious and infatuated countrymen? Nay, by Heaven, it is not a trifle that shall prevent his majesty from possessing the services of three such heroes. Here are five guineas apiece for you the moment that you put foot on board the *Alacrity* cutter; and that can easily be done, as she lies at anchor this very night, only two short leagues to the south of this, in a small port, where she is riding out the gale as snugly as if she were in a corner of this room."

One of the men affected to gaze at the money with longing eyes, while he asked, as if weighing the terms of the engagement:

"Whether the *Alacrity* was called a good sea-boat, and was thought to give a comfortable berth to her crew?"

"Comfortable!" echoed Borroughcliffe; "for that matter, she is called the bravest cutter in the navy. You have seen much of the world, I dare say; did you ever see such a place as the marine arsenal at Carthagena, in old Spain?"

"Indeed I have, sir," returned the seaman, in a cool, collected tone.

"Ah! you have! well, did you ever meet with a house in Paris that they call the Tuileries? because it's a dog-kennel to the *Alacrity*."

"I have even fallen in with the place you mention, sir," returned the sailor; "and must own the berth quite good enough for such as I am, if it tallies with your description."

"The deuce take these blue-jackets!" muttered Borroughcliffe, addressing himself unconsciously to Miss Plowden, near whom he happened to be at the time; "they run their tarry countenances into all the corners of the earth, and abridge a man most lamentably in his comparisons. Now, who the devil would have thought that fellow had ever put his sea-green eyes on the palace of King Louis?"

Katherine heeded not his speech, but sat eying the prisoners with a confused and wavering expression of countenance, while Colonel Howard renewed his discourse by exclaiming:

"Come, come, Borroughcliffe, let us give the lads no tales for a recruit, but good, plain, honest English—God bless the language, and the land for which it was first made, too! There is no necessity to tell these men, if they are, what they seem to be, practical seamen, that a cutter of ten guns contains all the room and accommodations of a palace."

"Do you allow nothing for English oak and English comfort, mine host?" said the immovable captain; "do you think, good sir, that I measure fitness and propriety by square and compass, as if I were planning Solomon's Temple anew? All I mean to say is, that the *Alacrity* is a vessel of singular compactness and magical arrangement of room. Like the tent of that handsome brother of the fairy in the Arabian Nights, she is big or she is little, as occasion needeth; and now hang me if I don't think I have uttered more in her favor than her commander would say to help me to a recruit, though no lad in the

three kingdoms should appear willing to try how a scarlet coat would suit his boorish figure."

"That time has not yet arrived, and God forbid that it ever should, while the monarch needs a soldier in the field to protect his rights!—But what say ye, my men? you have heard the recommendation that Captain Borroughcliffe has given of the *Alacrity*, which is altogether true—after making some allowances for language. Will ye serve? shall I order you a cheering glass a man, and lay by the gold till I hear from the cutter that you are enrolled under the banners of the best of kings?"

Katherine Plowden, who hardly seemed to breathe, so close and intent was the interest with which she regarded the seamen, fancied she observed lurking smiles on their faces; but if her conjectures were true, their disposition to be merry went no further, and the one who had spoken hitherto replied, in the same calm manner as before.

"You will excuse us if we decline shipping in the cutter, sir; we are used to distant voyages and large vessels, whereas the *Alacrity* is kept at coast duty and is not of a size to lay herself alongside of a Don, or a Frenchman with a double row of teeth."

"If you prefer that sort of sport, you must to the right-about for Yarmouth; there you will find ships that will meet anything that swims," said the colonel.

"Perhaps the gentleman would prefer abandoning the cares and dangers of the ocean for a life of ease and gayety," said the captain. "The hand that has long dallied with the marlinspike may be easily made to feel a trigger as gracefully as a lady touches the keys of her piano. In short, there is and there is not a great resemblance between the life of a sailor and that of a soldier. There are no gales of wind, nor short allowances, nor reefing topsails, nor shipwrecks, among soldiers; and, at the same time, there is just as much, or even more, grog-drinking, jollifying, care-killing fun around a canteen and an open knapsack than there is on the end of a mess-chest, with a full can and a Saturday-night breeze. I crossed the ocean several times, and I must own that a ship, in good weather, is very much the same as a camp or comfortable barracks; mind, I say only in very good weather."

"We have no doubt that all you say is true, sir," observed the spokesman of the three; "but what to you may seem a hardship to us is pleasure. We have faced too many a gale to mind a capful of wind, and should think ourselves always in the calm latitudes in one of your barracks, where there is nothing to do but to eat our grub, and to march a little fore and aft a small piece of green earth. We hardly know one end of a musket from the other."

"No!" said Borroughcliffe, musing; and then, advancing with a quick step towards them, he cried, in a spirited manner: "Attention! right! dress!"

The speaker, and the seaman next him, gazed at the captain in silent wonder; but the third individual of the party, who had drawn himself a little aside, as if willing to be unnoticed, or perhaps pondering on his condition, involuntarily started at this unexpected order, and, erecting himself, threw his head to the right as promptly as if he had been on a parade-ground.

"Oho! ye are apt scholars, gentlemen, and ye can learn, I see," continued Borroughcliffe—"I feel it to be proper that I detain these men till to-morrew morning, Colonel Howard; and yet I would give them better quarters than the hard benches of the guard-room."

"Act your pleasure, Captain Borroughcliffe," returned the host, "so you do but your duty to our royal master. They shall not want for cheer, and they can have a room over the servants' offices in the south side of the Abbey."

"Three rooms, my colonel, three rooms must be provided, though I give up my own."

"There are several empty apartments there, where blankets might be taken, and the men placed for safe-keeping, if you deem it necessary; though to me they seem like good loyal tars, whose greatest glory it would be to serve their prince, and whose chief pleasure would consist in getting alongside of a Don or a Monsieur."

"We shall discuss these matters anon," said Borroughcliffe, dryly. "I see Miss Plowden begins to look grave at our abusing her patience so long, and I know that cold coffee is, like withered love, but a tasteless sort of a beverage. Come, gentlemen, *en avant!* you have seen the Tuileries, and must have heard a little French. Mr. Christopher Dillon, know you where these three small apartments are 'situate, lying, and being,' as your parchments read?"

"I do, sir," said the complying lawyer, "and shall take much pleasure in guiding you to them. I think your decision that of a prudent and sagacious officer, and much doubt whether Durham Castle, or some other fortress, will be thought too big to hold them, ere long."

As this speech was uttered while the men were passing from the room its effect on them was unnoticed; but Katherine Plowden, who was left for a few moments by herself, sat and pondered over what she had seen and heard with a thoughtfulness of manner that was not usual to her gay and buoyant spirits. The sounds of the retiring footsteps, however, gradually grew fainter, and the return of her guardian alone recalled the recollection of the young lady to the duties of her situation.

While engaged in the little offices of the tea-table, Katherine threw many furtive glances at the veteran; but, although he seemed to be musing, there was nothing austere or suspicious in his frank open countenance.

"There is much useless trouble taken with these wandering seamen, sir," said Katherine at length; "it seems to be the particular province of Mr. Christopher Dillon to make all that come in contact with him excessively uncomfortable."

"And what has Kit to do with the detention of the men?"

"What! why, has he not undertaken to stand godfather to their prisons?—by a woman's patience, I think, Colonel Howard, this business will gain a pretty addition to the names of St. Ruth. It is already called a house, an abbey, a place, and by some a castle; let Mr. Dillon have his way for a month, and it will add jail to the number."

"Kit is not so happy as to possess the favor of Miss Plowden; but still Kit is a worthy fellow, and a good fellow, and a sensible fellow; ay! and, what is more valuable than all these put together, Miss Katherine, Mr. Christopher Dillon is a faithful and loyal subject to his prince. His mother was my cousin-german, madam, and I cannot say how soon I may call him my nephew. The Dillons are of good Irish extraction, and I believe that even Miss Plowden will admit that the Howards have some pretensions to a name."

"Ah! it is those very things called names that I most allude to," said Katherine quickly. "But an hour since you were indignant, my dear guardian, because you suspected that I insinuated you ought to write jailer behind the name of Howard, and even now you submit to have the office palmed upon you."

"You forget, Miss Katherine Plowden, that it is the pleasure of one of his majesty's officers to detain these men."

"But I thought that the glorious British constitution, which you so often mention," interrupted the young lady, spiritedly, "gives liberty to all who touch these blessed shores; you know, sir, that out of twenty blacks that you brought with you, how few remain; the rest having fled on the wings of the spirit of British liberty!"

This was touching a festering sore in the colonel's feelings, and his provoking ward well knew the effects her observation was likely to produce. Her guardian did not break forth in a violent burst of rage, or furnish those manifestations of his ire that he was wont to do on less important subjects; but he arose, with all his dignity concentrated in a look, and, after making a violent effort to restrain his feelings within the bounds necessary to preserve the decorum of his exit, he ventured a reply.

"That the British constitution is glorious, madam, is most true. That this island is the sole refuge where liberty has been able to find a home is also true. The tyranny and oppression of the Congress, which are grinding down the colonies to the powder of desolation and poverty, are

not worthy the sacred name. Rebellion pollutes all that it touches, madam. Although it often commences under the sanction of holy liberty, it ever terminates in despotism. The annals of the world, from the time of the Greeks and Romans down to the present day, abundantly prove it. There was that Julius Cæsar—he was one of your people's men, and he ended a tyrant. Oliver Cromwell was another—a rebel, a demagogue and a tyrant. The gradations, madam, are as inevitable as from childhood to youth, and from youth to age. As for the little affair that you have been pleased to mention of the—of the—of my private concerns, I can only say that the affairs of nations are not to be judged of by domestic incidents any more than domestic occurrences are to be judged of by national politics." The colonel, like many a better logician, mistook his antithesis for argument and paused a moment to admire his own eloquence; but the current of his thoughts, which always flowed in torrents on this subject, swept him along in its course, and he continued: "Yes, madam, here, and here alone, is true liberty to be found. With this solemn asseveration, which is not lightly made, but which is the result of sixty years' experience, I leave you, Miss Plowden; let it be a subject of deep reflection with you, for I too well understand your treacherous feelings not to know that your political errors encourage your personal foibles; reflect, for your own sake, if you love not only your own happiness but your respectability and standing in the world. As for the black hounds that you spoke of, they are a set of rebellious, mutinous, ungrateful rascals; and if ever I meet one of the damned——"

The colonel had so far controlled his feelings as to leave the presence of the lady before he broke out into the bitter invectives we have recorded, and Katherine stood a minute, pressing her forefinger on her lips, listening to his voice as it grumbled along the gallery, until the sounds were finally excluded by the closing of a distant door. The willful girl then shook her dark locks, and a smile of arch mischief blended with an expression of regret in her countenance, as she spoke to herself, while with hurried hands she threw her tea equipage aside in a confused pile:

"It was, perhaps, a cruel experiment, but is has succeeded. Though prisoners ourselves, we are at least left free for the remainder of this night. These mysterious sailors must be examined more closely. If the proud eye of Edward Griffith was not glaring under the black wig of one of them, I am no judge of features; and where has Master Barnstable concealed his charming visage! for neither of the others could be he. But now for Cecilia."

Her light form glided from the room, while she was yet speaking; and flitting along the dimly-lighted passages, it disappeared in one of those turnings that led to the more secret apartments of the Abbey.

CHAPTER XIII.

"How! Lucia, wouldst thou have me sink away
In pleasing dreams, and lose myself in love?"
—CATO.

THE reader must not imagine that the world stood still during the occurrence of scenes we have related. By the time the three seamen were placed in as many different rooms, and a sentinel was stationed in the gallery common to them all in such a manner as to keep an eye on his whole charge at once, the hour had run deep into the night. Captain Borroughcliffe obeyed a summons from the colonel, who made him an evasive apology for the change in their evening's amusement, and challenged his guest to a renewal of the attack on the Madeira. This was too grateful a theme to be lightly discussed by the captain; and the Abbey clock had given forth as many of its mournful remonstrances as the division of the hours would permit before they separated. In the meantime Mr. Dillon became invisible; though a servant, when questioned by the host on the subject, announced that he "believed Mr. Christopher had chosen to ride over to ——, to be in readiness to join the hunt, on the morning, with the dawn."

While the gentlemen were thus indulging themselves in the dining-parlor, and laughing over the tales of other times and hard campaigns, two very different scenes occurred in other parts of the building.

When the quiet of the Abbey was only interrupted by the howling of the wind, or by the loud and prolonged laughs which echoed through the passages from the joyous pair, who were thus comfortably established by the side of the bottle, a door was gently opened on one of the galleries of the "cloisters," and Katherine Plowden issued from it, wrapped in a close mantle, and holding in her hand a chamber-lamp, which threw its dim light faintly along the gloomy walls in front, leaving all behind her obscured in darkness. She was, however, soon followed by two other female figures, clad in the same manner, and provided with similar lights. When all were in the gallery, Katherine drew the door softly to, and proceeded in front to lead the way.

"Hist!" said the low, tremulous voice of Cecilia, "they are yet up in the other parts of the house; and, if it be as you suspect, our visit would betray them, and prove the means of their certain destruction."

"Is the laugh of Colonel Howard in his cups so singular and unknown to your ear, Cecilia, that you know it not?" said Katherine, with a little spirit; "or do you forget that on such occasions he seldom leaves himself ears to hear or eyes to see with? But follow me; it is as I suspect—it must be as I suspect; and unless we do something to rescue them, they are lost, unless they have laid a deeper scheme than is apparent."

"It is a dangerous road ye both journey," added the placid tones of Alice Dunscombe; "but ye are young, and ye are credulous."

"If you disapprove of our visit," said Cecilia, "it cannot be right, and we had better return."

"No, no: I have said naught to disapprove of your present errand. If God has put the lives of those in your custody whom ye have taught yourselves to look up to with love and reverence, such as woman is bound to yield to one man, He has done it for no idle purpose. Lead us to their doors, Katherine; let us relieve our doubts, at least."

The ardent girl did not wait for a second bidding, but she lead them with light and quick steps along the gallery, until they reached the termination, where they descended to the basement-floor by a flight of narrow steps; and, carefully opening a small door, emerged into the open air. They now stood on a small plat of grass, which lay between the building and the ornamental garden, across which they moved rapidly, concealing their lights, and bending their shrinking forms before the shivering blasts that poured their fury upon them from the ocean. They soon reached a large but rough addition to the buildings, that concealed its plain architecture behind the more labored and highly-finished parts of the edifice, into which they entered through a massive door that stood ajar, as if to admit them.

"Chloe has been true to my orders," whispered Katherine, as they passed out of the chilling air; "now, if all the servants are asleep, our chance to escape unnoticed amounts to certainty."

It became necessary to go through the servants' hall, which they effected unobserved, as it had but one occupant, an aged black man, who, being posted with his ear within two feet of a bell, in this attitude had committed himself to a deep sleep. Gliding through this hall they entered divers long and intricate passages, all of which seemed as familiar to Katherine as they were unknown to her companions, until they reached another flight of steps, which they ascended. They were now near their goal, and stopped to examine whether any or what difficulties were likely to be opposed to their further progress.

"Now, indeed, our case seems hopeless," whispered Katherine, as they stood, concealed by the darkness, in one end of an extremely long, narrow passage; "here is the sentinel in the building, instead of being, as I had supposed, under the windows; what is to be done now?"

"Let us return," said Cecilia, in the same manner; "my influence with my uncle is great, even though he seems unkind to us at times. In the morning I will use it to persuade him to free them, on receiving their promise to abandon all such attempts in future."

"In the morning it will be too late," returned Katherine; "I saw that demon Kit Dillon mount his horse, under the pretense of riding to the great hunt of to-morrow, but I know his malicious eye too well to be deceived in his errand. He is silent, that he may be sure; and if to-morrow comes and finds Griffith within these walls, he will be condemned to a scaffold."

"Say no more," said Alice Dunscombe, with singular emotion; "some lucky circumstance may aid us with this sentinel."

As she spoke, she advanced; they had not proceeded far before the stern voice of the soldier challenged the party.

"'Tis no time to hesitate," whispered Katherine—"We are the ladies of the Abbey, looking to our domestic affairs," she continued, aloud, "and think it a little remarkable that we are to encounter armed men while going through our own dwelling."

The soldier respectfully presented his musket, and replied:

"My orders are to guard the doors of these three rooms, ladies; we have prisoners in them, and, as for anything else, my duty will be to serve you in all my power."

"Prisoners!" exclaimed Katherine, in affected surprise; "does Captain Borroughcliffe make St. Ruth's Abbey a jail? Of what offenses are the poor men guilty?"

"I know not, my lady; but, as they are sailors, I suppose they have run from his majesty's service."

"This is singular, truly! and why are they not sent to the county prison?"

"This must be examined into," said Cecilia, dropping the mantle from before her face. "As mistress of this house, I claim a right to know whom its walls contain; you will oblige me by opening the doors, for I see you have the keys suspended from your belt."

The sentinel hesitated. He was greatly awed by the presence and beauty of the speakers, but a still voice reminded him of his duty. A lucky thought, however, interposed to relieve him from his dilemma, and at the same time to comply with the request, or rather order, of the lady. As he handed her the keys, he said:

"Here they are, my lady; my orders are to keep the prisoners in, not to keep any one out. When you are done with them, you will please return them to me, if it be only to save a poor fellow's eye; for unless the door is kept locked, I shall not dare to look about me for a moment."

Cecilia promised to return the keys, and she had applied one of them to a lock with a trembling hand when Alice Dunscombe arrested her arm, and addressed the soldier.

"Say you there are three!—are they men in years?"

"No, my lady, all good, serviceable lads, who couldn't do better than to serve his majesty, or, as it may prove, worse than to run from their colors."

"But are their years and appearance similar? I ask; for I have a friend who has been guilty of some boyish tricks, and has tried the seas, I hear, among other foolish hazards."

"There is no boy here. In the far room on the left is a smart, soldier-looking chap, of about thirty, who the captain thinks has carried a musket before now; on him I am charged to keep a particular eye. Next to him is as pretty a looking youth as eyes could wish to see, and it makes one feel mournful to think what he must come to, if he has really deserted his ship. In the room near you is a smaller, quiet little body, who might make a better preacher than a sailor, or a soldier either, he has such a gentle way with him."

Alice covered her eyes with her hand a moment, and then, recovering herself, proceeded:

"Gentleness may do more for the unfortunate men than fear; here is a guinea: withdraw to the far end of the passage, where you can watch them as well as here, while we enter, and endeavor to make them confess who and what they really are."

The soldier took the money and, after looking about him in a little uncertainty, he at length complied, as it was obviously true they could only escape by passing him, near the flight of steps. When he was beyond hearing, Alice Dunscombe turned to her companions, and a slight glow appeared in feverish spots on her cheeks, as she addressed them :

"It would be idle to attempt to hide from you that I expect to meet the individual whose voice I must have heard in reality to-night, instead of only imaginary sounds, as I vainly, if not wickedly, supposed. I have many reasons for changing my opinion, the chief of which is, that he is leagued with the rebellious Americans in this unnatural war. Nay, chide me not, Miss Plowden; you will remember that I found my being on this island.—I come here on no vain or weak errand, Miss Howard, but to spare human blood." She paused, as if struggling to speak calmly. "But no one can witness the interview except our God."

"Go, then," said Katherine, secretly rejoicing at her determination, "while we inquire into the characters of the others."

Alice Dunscombe turned the key; and, gently opening the door, she desired her companions to tap for her, as they returned, and then instantly disappeared in the apartment.

Cecilia and her cousin proceeded to the next door, which they opened in silence, and entered cautiously into the room. Katherine Plowden had so far examined into the arrangements of Colonel Howard as to know that, at the same time he ordered blankets to be provided for the prisoners, he had not thought it necessary to administer any further to the accommodations of men who had apparently made their beds and pillows of planks for the greater part of their lives.

The ladies accordingly found the youthful sailor whom they sought, with his body rolled in the shaggy covering, extended at his length along the naked boards, and buried in a deep sleep. So timid were the steps of his visitors, and so noiseless was their entrance, that they approached even to his side without disturbing his slumbers. The head of the prisoner lay rudely pillowed on a billet of wood, one hand protecting his face from its rough surface, and the other thrust into his bosom, where it rested, with a relaxed grasp, on the handle of a dirk. Although he slept, and that heavily, yet his rest was unnatural and perturbed. His breathing was hard and quick, and something like the low, rapid murmurings of a confused utterance mingled with his respiration. The moment had now arrived when the character of Cecilia Howard appeared to undergo an entire change. Hitherto she had been led by her cousin, whose activity and enterprise seemed to qualify her so well for the office of guide; but now she advanced before Katherine, and, extending her lamp in such a manner as to throw the light across the face of the sleeper, she bent to examine his countenance with keen and anxious eyes.

"Am I right?" whispered her cousin.

"May God, in his infinite compassion, pity and protect him!" murmured Cecilia, her whole frame involuntarily shuddering, as the conviction that she beheld Griffith flashed across her mind. "Yes, Katherine, it is he, and presumptuous madness has driven him here. But time presses; he must be awakened, and his escape effected at every hazard."

"Nay, then, delay no longer, but rouse him from his sleep."

"Griffith! Edward Griffith!" said the soft tones of Cecilia. "Griffith, awake!"

"Your call is useless, for they sleep nightly among tempests and boisterous sounds," said Katherine; "but I have heard it said that the smallest touch will generally cause one of them to stir."

"Griffith!" repeated Cecilia, laying her fair hand timidly on his own.

The flash of lightning is not more nimble than the leap that the young man made to his feet, which he no sooner gained than his dirk gleamed in the light of the lamps as he brandished it fiercely with one hand, while with the other he extended a pistol, in a menacing attitude, toward only his disturbers.

"Stand back!" he exclaimed; "I am your prisoner as a corpse!"

The fierceness of his front, and the glaring eyeballs, that rolled wildly around him, appalled Cecilia, who shrank back in fear, dropping her mantle from her person, but still keeping her mild eyes fastened on his countenance with a confiding gaze that contradicted her shrinking attitude, as she replied:

"Edward, it is I, Cecilia Howard, come to save you from destruction; you are known even through your ingenious disguise."

The pistol and the dirk fell together on the blanket of the young sailor, whose looks instantly lost their disturbed expression in a glow of pleasure.

"Fortune at length favors me!" he cried. "This is kind, Cecilia; more than I deserve, and much more than I expected. But you are not alone?"

"'Tis my cousin Kate; to her piercing eyes you owe your detection, and she has kindly consented to accompany me, that we might urge you to—nay, that we might, if necessary, assist you to fly. For 'tis cruel folly, Griffith, thus to tempt your fate."

"Have I tempted it, then, in vain!—Miss Plowden, to you I must appeal for an answer and a justification."

Katherine looked displeased; but, after a moment's hesitation, she replied:

"Your servant, Mr. Griffith; I perceive that the erudite Captain Barnstable has not only succeeded in spelling through my scrawl, but he has also given it to all hands for perusal."

"Now you do both him and me injustice," said Griffith, "it surely was not treachery to show me a plan in which I was to be a principal actor."

"Ah! doubtless your excuses are as obedient to your calls as your men," returned the young lady; "but how comes it that the hero of the *Ariel* sends a deputy to perform a duty that is so peculiarly his own? Is he wont to be second in rescues?"

"Heaven forbid that you should think so meanly of him for a moment! We owe you much, Miss Plowden; but we may have other duties. You know that we serve our common country, and have a superior with us, whose beck is our law."

"Return, then, Mr. Griffith, while you may, to the service of our bleeding country," said Cecilia; "and after the joint efforts of her brave children have expelled the intruders from her soil, let us hope there shall come a time when Katherine and myself may be restored to our native homes."

"Think you, Miss Howard, to how long a period the mighty arm of the British king may extend that time? We shall prevail—a nation fighting for its dearest rights must ever prevail; but 'tis not the work of a day, for a people, poor, scattered, and impoverished as we have been to beat down a power like that of England; surely you forget that, in bidding me to leave you with such expectations, Miss Howard, you doom me to an almost hopeless banishment!"

"We must trust to the will of God," said Cecilia; "if He ordain that America is to be free only after protracted sufferings, I can aid her but with my prayers; but you have an arm and an experience, Griffith, that might do her better service. Waste not your usefulness, then, in visionary schemes for private happiness, but seize the moments as they offer, and return to your ship, if indeed it is yet in safety, and endeavor to forget this mad undertaking, and, for a time, the being who has led you to the adventure."

"This is a reception that I had not anticipated," returned Griffith; "for though accident, and not intention, has thrown me into your presence this evening, I did hope that, when I again saw the frigate, it would be in your company, Cecilia."

"You cannot justly reproach me, Mr. Griffith, with your disappointment, for I have not uttered or authorized a syllable that could induce you or any one to believe that I would consent to quit my uncle."

"Miss Howard will not think me presumptuous if I remind her that there was a time when she did not think me unworthy to be intrusted with her person and happiness."

A rich bloom mantled on the face of Cecilia, as she replied:

"Nor do I now, Mr. Griffith; but you do well to remind me of my former weakness, for the recollection of its folly and imprudence only adds to my present strength."

"Nay," interrupted her eager lover, "if I intended a reproach, or harbored a boastful thought, spurn me from you forever, as unworthy of your favor."

"I acquit you of both much easier than I can acquit myself of the charge of weakness and folly," continued Cecilia; "but there are many things that have occurred since we last met to prevent a repetition of such inconsiderate rashness on my part. One of them is," she added, smiling sweetly, "that I have numbered twelve additional months to my age, and a hundred to my experience. Another, and perhaps a more important one, is, that my uncle then continued among the friends of his youth, surrounded by those whose blood mingles with his own; but here he lives a stranger; and, though he finds some consolation in dwelling in a building where his ancestors have dwelt before him, yet he walks as an alien through its gloomy passages, and would find the empty honor but a miserable compensation for the kindness and affection of one whom he has loved and cherished from her infancy."

"And yet he is opposed to you in your private wishes, Cecilia, unless my besotted vanity has led me to believe what it would now be madness to learn was false; and, in your opinions of public things, you are quite as widely separated. I should think there could be but little happiness dependent on a connection where there is no one feeling entertained in common."

"There is, and an all-important one," said Miss Howard; "'tis our love. He is my kind, my affectionate, and, unless thwarted by some evil cause, my indulgent uncle and guardian—and I am his brother Harry's child. This tie is not easily to be severed, Mr. Griffith; though, as I do not wish to see you crazed, I shall not add that your besotted vanity has played you false; but surely, Edward, it is possible to feel a double tie, and so to act as to discharge our duties to both. I never, never can or will consent to desert my uncle, a stranger as he is in the land whose rule he upholds so blindly. You know not this England, Griffith; she receives her children from the colonies with cold and haughty distrust, like a jealous step-mother, who is wary of the favors that she bestows on her fictitious offspring."

"I know her in peace, and I know her in war," said the young sailor, proudly, "and can add that she is a haughty friend and a stubborn foe; but she grapples now with those who ask no more of her than an open sea and an enemy's favors. But this determination will be melancholy tidings for me to convey to Barnstable."

"Nay," said Cecilia, smiling, "I cannot vouch for others who have no uncles, and who have an extra quantity of ill-humor and spleen against this country, its people, and its laws, although profoundly ignorant of them all."

"Is Miss Howard tired of seeing me under the tiles of St. Ruth?" asked Katherine. "But hark! are there not footsteps approaching along the gallery?"

They listened, in breathless silence, and soon heard distinctly the approaching tread of more than one person. Voices were quite audible, and before they had time to consult on what was best to be done, the words of the speakers were distinctly heard at the door of their own apartment.

"Ah! he has a military air about him, Peters, that will make him a prize. Come, open the door."

"This is not his room, your honor," said the alarmed soldier: "he quarters in the last room in the gallery."

"How know you that, fellow? Come, produce the key, and open the way for me; I care not who sleeps here; there is no saying but I may enlist them all three."

A single moment of dreadful incertitude succeeded, when the sentinel was heard saying in reply to this peremptory order:

"I thought your honor wanted to see the one with the black stock, and so left the rest of the keys at the other end of the passage; but——"

"But nothing, you loon; a sentinel

should always carry his keys about him like a jailer; follow, then, and let me see the lad who dresses so well to the right."

As the heart of Katherine began to beat less vehemently, she said:

"'Tis Borroughcliffe, and too drunk to see that we have left the key in the door; but what is to be done? We have but a moment for consultation."

"As the day dawns," said Cecilia, quickly, "I shall send here, under the pretense of conveying you food, my own women——"

"There is no need of risking anything for my safety," interrupted Griffith; "I hardly think we shall be detained, and, if we are, Barnstable is at hand with a force that would scatter these recruits to the four winds of heaven."

"Ah! that would lead to bloodshed, and scenes of horror!" exclaimed Cecilia.

"Listen!" cried Katherine, "they approach again!"

A man now stopped, once more, at their door, which was opened softly, and the face of the sentinel was thrust into the apartment.

"Captain Borroughcliffe is on his rounds, and for fifty of your guineas I would not leave you here another minute."

"But one word more," said Cecilia.

"Not a syllable, my lady, for my life!" returned the man; "the lady from the next room waits for you, and in mercy to a poor fellow go back where you came from."

The appeal was unanswerable, and they complied, Cecilia saying, as they left the room:

"I shall send you food in the morning, young man, and directions how to take the remedy necessary to your safety."

In the passage they found Alice Dunscombe, with her face concealed in her mantle; and it would seem, by the heavy sighs that escaped from her, deeply agitated, by the interview which she had just encountered.

But as the reader may have some curiosity to know what occurred to distress this unoffending lady so sensibly, we shall detain the narrative to relate the substance of that which passed between her and the individual whom she sought.

CHAPTER XIV.

"As when a lion in his den,
Hath heard the hunter's cries,
And rushes forth to meet his foes,
So did the Douglas rise."—PERCY.

ALICE DUNSCOMBE did not find the second of the prisoners buried, like Griffith, in sleep, but he was seated on one of the old chairs that were in the apartment, with his back to the door, and apparently looking through the small window, on the dark and dreary scenery over which the tempest was yet sweeping in its fury. Her approach was unheeded, until the light from her lamp glared across his eyes, when he started from his musing posture, and advanced to meet her. He was the first to speak.

"I expected this visit," he said, "when I found that you recognized my voice; and I felt a deep assurance in my breast that Alice Dunscombe would never betray me."

His listener, though expecting this confirmation of her conjectures, was unable to make an immediate reply, but she sank into the seat he had abandoned, and waited a few moments as if to recover her powers.

"It was, then, no mysterious warning! no airy voice that mocked my ears; but a dread reality!" she at length said. "Why have you thus braved the indignation of the laws of your country? On what errand of fell mischief has your ruthless temper again urged you to embark?"

"This is strong and cruel language, coming from you to me, Alice Dunscombe," returned the stranger, with cool asperity, "and the time has been when I should have been greeted, after a shorter absence, with milder terms."

"I deny it not; I cannot, if I would, conceal my infirmity from myself or you; I hardly wish it to continue unknown to the world. If I have once esteemed you—if I have plighted to you my troth, and in

my confiding folly forgot my higher duties, God has amply punished me for the weakness in your own evil deeds."

"Nay, let not our meeting be embittered with useless and provoking recriminations," said the other; "for we have much to say before you communicate the errand of mercy on which you have come hither. I know you too well, Alice, not to see that you perceive the peril in which I am placed, and are willing to venture something for my safety. Your mother —does she yet live?"

"She has gone in quest of my blessed father," said Alice, covering her pale face with her hands; "they have left me alone, truly; for he who was to have been all to me, was first false to his faith, and has since become unworthy of my confidence."

The stranger became singularly agitated, his usually quiet eye glancing hastily from the floor to the countenance of his companion, as he paced the room with hurried steps; at length he replied:

"There is much, perhaps, to be said in explanation that you do not know. I left the country because I found in it nothing but oppression and injustice, and I could not invite you to become the bride of a wanderer without either name or fortune. But I have now the opportunity of proving my truth. You say you are alone; be so no longer, and try how far you were mistaken in believing that I should one day supply the place to you of both father and mother."

There is something soothing to a female ear in the offer of even protracted justice, and Alice spoke with less of acrimony in her tones, during the remainder of their conference, if not with less of severity in her language.

"You talk not like a man whose very life hangs but on a thread that the next minute may snap asunder. Whither would you lead me? is it to the Tower at London?"

"Think not I have weakly exposed my person without a sufficient protection," returned the stranger, with cool indifference; "there are many gallant men who only wait my signal to crush the paltry force of this officer like a worm beneath my feet."

"Then has the conjecture of Colonel Howard been true, and the manner in which the enemy's vessels have passed the shoals is no longer a mystery! You have been their pilot?"

"I have."

"What! would ye pervert the knowledge gained in the spring-time of your guileless youth to the foul purpose of bringing desolation to the doors of those you once knew and respected? John! John! is the image of the maiden, whom in her morning of beauty and simplicity I believe you did love, so faintly impressed that it cannot soften your hard heart to the misery of those among whom she has been born, and who compose her little world?"

"Not a hair of theirs shall be touched, not a thatch shall blaze, nor shall a sleepless night befall the vilest among them—and all for your sake, Alice! England comes to this contest with a seared conscience and bloody hands, but all shall be forgotten for the present, when both opportunity and power offer to make her feel our vengeance even in her vitals. I come on no such errand."

"What, then, has led you blindly into snares, where all your boasted aid would avail you nothing; for, should I call aloud your name even here, in the dark and dreary passages of this obscure edifice, the cry would echo through the country ere the morning, and a whole people would be found in arms to punish your audacity."

"My name has been sounded, and that in no gentle strains," returned the pilot, scornfully, "when a whole people have quailed at it—the craven, cowardly wretches flying before the man they had wronged. I have lived to bear the banners of the new Republic proudly in sight of the three kingdoms, when practiced skill and equal arms have in vain struggled to pluck it down. Ay! Alice, the echoes of my guns are still roaring among your eastern hills, and would render my name more appalling than inviting to your sleeping yeomen."

"Boast not of the momentary success that the arm of God has yielded to your unhallowed efforts," said Alice; "for a day of severe and heavy retribution must follow; nor flatter yourself with the idle hope that your name, terrible as ye have rendered it to the virtuous, is sufficient of itself to drive the thoughts of home, and country, and kin, from all who hear it. Nay, I know not that even now, in listening to you, I am not forgetting a solemn duty, which would teach me to proclaim your presence, that the land might know that her unnatural son is a dangerous burden in her bosom."

The pilot turned quickly in his short walk; and, after reading her countenance, with the expression of one who felt his security, he said in gentler tones:

"Would that be Alice Dunscombe? would that be like the mild, generous girl whom I knew in my youth? But I repeat, the threat would fail to intimidate, even if you were capable of executing it. I have said that it is only to make the signal to draw around me a force sufficient to scatter these dogs of soldiers to the four winds of heaven."

"Have you calculated your power justly, John?" said Alice, unconsciously betraying her deep interest in his safety. "Have you reckoned the probability of Mr. Dillon's arriving, accompanied by an armed band of horsemen, with this morning's sun? for it's no secret in the Abbey that he is gone in quest of such assistance."

"Dillon!" exclaimed the pilot, starting; "who is he? and on what suspicion does he seek this addition to your guard?"

"Nay, John, look not at me, as if you would know the secrets of my heart. It was not I who prompted him to such a step; you cannot for a moment think that I would betray you! But too surely he has gone; and, as the night wears rapidly away, you should be using the hour of grace to effect your own security."

"Fear not for me, Alice," returned the pilot, proudly, while a faint smile struggled around his compressed lips; "and yet I like not this movement either. How call you his name? Dillon! is he a minion of King George?"

"He is, John, what you are not, a loyal subject of his sovereign lord the king; and, though a native of the revolted colonies, he has preserved his virtue uncontaminated amid the corruptions and temptations of the times."

"An American! and disloyal to the liberties of the human race! By Heaven, he had better not cross me; for, if my arm reach him, it shall hold him forth as a spectacle of treason to the world!"

"And has not the world enough of such a spectacle in yourself? Are ye not, even now, breathing your native air, though lurking through the mists of the island, with desperate intent against its peace and happiness?"

A dark and fierce expression of angry resentment flashed from the eyes of the pilot, and even his iron frame seemed to shake with emotion, as he answered:

"Call you his dastardly and selfish treason, aiming, as it does, to aggrandize a few at the expense of millions, a parallel case to the generous ardor that impels a man to fight in the defense of sacred liberty? I might tell you that I am armed in the common cause of my fellow-subjects and countrymen; that, though an ocean divided us in distance, yet we are a people of the same blood, and children of the same parents, and that the hand which oppresses one inflicts an injury on the other. But I disdain all such narrow apologies. I was born on this orb, and I claim to be a citizen of it. A man with a soul not to be limited by the arbitrary boundaries of tyrants and hirelings, but one who has the right as well as the inclination to grapple with oppression, in whose name soever it is exercised, or in whatever hollow and specious shape it founds its claim to abuse our race."

"Ah! John, John, though this may sound like reason to rebellious ears, to mine it seemeth only as the ravings of insanity. It is in vain ye build up your new and disorganizing systems of rule, or rather misrule, which are opposed to all that the world has ever yet done, or ever will see done, in peace and happiness.

What avail your subtleties and false reasonings against the heart? It is the heart which tells us where our home is and how to love it."

"You talk like a weak and prejudiced woman, Alice," said the pilot, more composedly; "and one who would shackle nations with the ties that bind the young and feeble of your own sex together."

"And by what holier and better bond can they be united!" said Alice. "Are not the relations of domestic life of God's establishing, and have not the nations grown from families, as branches spread from the stem, till the tree overshadows the land? 'Tis an ancient and sacred tie that binds man to his nation; neither can it be severed without infamy."

The pilot smiled disdainfully, and, throwing open the rough exterior of his dress, he drew forth, in succession, several articles, while a glowing pride lighted his countenance as he offered them singly to her notice.

"See! Alice!" he said; "call you this infamy? This broad sheet of parchment is stamped with a seal of no mean importance, and it bears the royal name of the princely Louis also! And view this cross! decorated as it is with jewels, the gift of the same illustrious hand; it is not apt to be given to the children of infamy, neither is it wise or decorous to stigmatize a man who has not been thought unworthy to consort with princes and nobles by the opprobrious name of the 'Scotch Pirate.'"

"And have ye not earned the title, John, by ruthless deeds and bitter animosity? I could kiss the bawbles ye show me, if they were a thousand times less splendid, had they been laid upon your breast by the hands of your lawful prince; but now they appear to my eyes as indelible blots upon your attainted name. As for your associates, I have heard of them: and it seemeth that a queen might be better employed than encouraging by her smiles the disloyal subjects of other monarchs, though even her enemies. God only knows when His pleasure may suffer a spirit of disaffection to rise up among the people of her own nation, and then the thought that she has encouraged rebellion may prove both bitter and unwelcome."

"That the royal and lovely Antoinette has deigned to repay my services with a small portion of her gracious approbation is not among the least of my boasts," returned the pilot, in affected humility, while secret pride was manifested even in his lofty attitude. "But venture not a syllable in her dispraise, for you know not whom you censure. She is less distinguished by her illustrious birth and elevated station, than by her virtues and loveliness. She lives the first of her sex in Europe—the daughter of an emperor, the consort of the most powerful king, and the smiling and beloved patroness of a nation who worship at her feet. Her life is above all reproach, as it is above all earthly punishment, were she so lost as to merit it; and it has been the will of Providence to place her far beyond the reach of all human misfortunes."

"Has it placed her above human errors, John? Punishment is the natural and inevitable consequence of sin; and unless she can say more than has ever fallen to the lot of humanity to say truly, she may be made to feel the chastening arm of One to whose eyes all her pageantry and power are as vacant as the air she breathes—so insignificant must it seem when compared to his own just rule! But if you vaunt that you have been permitted to kiss the hem of the robes of the French queen, and have been the companion of high-born and flaunting ladies, clad in their richest array, can ye yet say to yourself, that amid them all ye have found one whose tongue has been bold to tell you the truth, or whose heart has sincerely joined in her false professions?"

"Certainly none have met me with the reproaches that I have this night received from Alice Dunscombe, after a separation of six long years," returned the pilot.

"If I have spoken to you the words of holy truth, John, let them not be the less welcome, because they are strangers to your ears. Oh! think that she who has thus dared to use the language of reproach to one whose name is terrible to all who live on the border of this island, is led to

the rash act by no other motive than interest in your eternal welfare."

"Alice! Alice! you madden me with these foolish speeches! Am I a monster to frighten unprotected women and helpless children? What mean these epithets, as coupled with my name? Have you, too, lent a credulous ear to the vile calumnies which the policy of your rulers has ever attempted to destroy the fair fame of those who oppose them, and those chiefly who oppose them with success? My name may be terrible to the officers of the royal fleet, but where and how have I earned a claim to be considered formidable to the helpless and unoffending?"

Alice Dunscombe cast a furtive and timid glance at the pilot, which spoke even stronger than her words, as she replied:

"I know not that all which is said of you and your deeds is true. I have often prayed, in bitterness and sorrow, that a tenth part of that which is laid to your charge may not be heaped on your devoted head at the great and final account. But, John, I have known you long and well, and heaven forbid that, on this solemn occasion, which may be the last of our earthly interviews, I should be found wanting in Christian duty, through a woman's weakness! I have often thought, when I have heard the gall of bitter reproach and envenomed language hurled against your name, that they who spoke so rashly little understood the man they vituperated. But, though ye are at times, and I may say almost always, as mild and even as the smoothest sea over which ye have ever sailed, yet God has mingled in your nature a fearful mixture of fierce passions, which, roused, are more like the southern waters when troubled with the tornado. It is difficult for me to say how far this evil spirit may lead a man who has been goaded by fancied wrongs to forget his country and home, and who is suddenly clothed with power to show his resentments."

The pilot listened with rooted attention, and his piercing eye seemed to reach the seat of those thoughts which she but half-expressed; still he retained the entire command of himself, and answered, more in sorrow than in anger:

"If anything could convert me to your own peaceful and unresisting opinions, Alice, it would be the reflections that offer themselves at this conviction, that even you have been led by the base tongues of my dastardly enemies to doubt my honor and conduct. What is fame, when a man can be thus traduced to his nearest friends? But no more of these childish reflections; they are unworthy of myself, my office, and the sacred cause in which I have enlisted!"

"Nay, John, shake them not off," said Alice, unconsciously laying her hand on his arm; "they are as the dew to the parched herbage, and may freshen the feelings of your youth, and soften the heart that has grown hard, if hard it be, more by unnatural indulgence, than its own base inclinations."

"Alice Dunscombe," said the pilot, approaching her with solemn earnestness, "I have learned much this night, though I came not in quest of such knowledge. You have taught me how powerful is the breath of the slanderer, and how frail is the tenure by which we hold our good names. Full twenty times have I met the hirelings of your prince in open battle, fighting ever manfully under that flag which was first raised to the breeze by my own hands, and which, I thank my God, I have never yet seen lowered an inch; but with no one act of cowardice or private wrong in all that service can I reproach myself; and yet, how am I rewarded? The tongue of the vile calumniator is keener than the sword of the warrior, and leaves a more indelible scar!"

"Never have ye uttered a truer sentiment, John, and God send that ye may encourage such thoughts to your own eternal advantage!" said Alice, with engaging interest. "You say that you have risked your own precious life in twenty combats, and observe how little of Heaven's favor is bestowed on the abettors of rebellion! They tell me that the world has never witnessed a more desperate and bloody struggle than this last, for which your name has been made

to sound to the farthermost ends of the isle."

"'Twill be known whenever naval combats are spoken of!" interrupted the pilot, the melancholy which had begun to lower in his countenance giving place to a look of proud exultation.

"And yet its fancied glory cannot shield your name from wrong, nor are the rewards of the victor equal, in a temporal sense, to those which the vanquished has received. Know you that our gracious monarch, deeming your adversary's cause so sacred, has extended to him his royal favor?"

"Ay! he has dubbed him knight!" exclaimed the pilot, with a scornful and bitter laugh; "let him be again furnished with a ship, and me with another opportunity, and I promise him an earldom, if being again vanquished can constitute a claim!"

"Speak not so rashly, nor vaunt yourself of possessing a protecting power that may desert you, John, when you most need it, and least expect the change," returned his companion; "the battle is not always to the strong, neither is the race to the swift."

"Forget you, my good Alice, that your words will admit of a double meaning? Has the battle been with the strong? Though you say not well in denying the race to the swift. Yes, yes, often and again have the dastards escaped me by their prudent speed! Alice Dunscombe, you know not the thousandth part of the torture that I have been made to feel, by high-born miscreants, who envy the merit they cannot equal, and detract from the glory of deeds that they dare not attempt to emulate. How have I been cast upon the ocean, like some unworthy vessel that is commissioned to do a desperate deed, and then to bury itself in the ruin it has made! How many malignant hearts have triumphed as they beheld my canvas open, thinking that it was spread to hasten me to a gibbet, or to a tomb in the bosom of the ocean! but I have disappointed them!"

The eyes of the pilot no longer gazed with their piercing and settled meaning; but they flashed with a fierce and wild pleasure, as he continued, in a louder voice:

"Yes, bitterly have I disappointed them! Oh! the triumph over my fallen enemies has been tame to this heartfelt exultation which places me immeasurably above those false and craven hypocrites! I begged, I implored the Frenchmen for the meanest of their craft, which possessed but the common qualities of a ship-of-war; I urged the policy and necessity of giving me such a force, for even then I promised to be found in harm's way; but envy and jealousy robbed me of my just dues, and of more than half my glory. They call me pirate! If I have claim to the name, it was furnished more by the paltry outfit of my friends than by any act toward my enemies!"

"And do not these recollections prompt you to return to your allegiance, to your prince and native land, John?" said Alice in a subdued voice.

"Away with the silly thought!" interrupted the pilot, recalled to himself as if by a sudden conviction of the weakness he had betrayed; "it is ever thus where men are made conspicuous by their works—but to your visit—I have the power to rescue myself and companions from this paltry confinement, and yet I would not have it done with violence for your sake. Bring you the means of doing it in quiet?"

"When the morning arrives you will all be conducted to the apartment where we first met. This will be done at the solicitation of Miss Howard, under the plea of compassion and justice, and with the professed object of inquiring into your situations. Her request will not be refused; and while your guard is stationed at the door, you will be shown, by another entrance, through the private apartments of the wing, to a window whence you can easily leap to the ground, where a thicket is at hand; afterward we shall trust your safety to your own discretion."

"And if this Dillon, of whom you have spoken, should suspect the truth, how will you answer to the law for aiding our escape?"

"See, Alice," he said, "call you this infamy?"—*The Pilot.*

"I believe he little dreams who is among the prisoners," said Alice, musing, "though he may have detected the character of one of your companions. But it is private feeling rather than public spirit that urges him on."

"I have suspected something of this," returned the pilot, with a smile, that crossed those features where ungovernable passions had so lately been exhibited, with an effect that might be likened to the last glimmering of an expiring conflagration, serving to render the surrounding ruin more obvious. "This young Griffith has led me from my direct path with his idle imprudence, and it is right that his mistress should incur some risk. But with you, Alice, the case is different; here you are only a guest, and it is unnecessary that you should be known in the unfortunate affair. Should my name get abroad, this recreant American, this Colonel Howard, will find all the favor he has purchased by advocating the cause of tyranny necessary to protect him from the displeasure of the ministry."

"I fear to trust so delicate a measure to the young discretion of my amiable friend," said Alice, shaking her head. "Remember that she has her attachment to plead in her excuse; but dare you say to the world that you still remember, with gentle feelings, the man whom you stigmatize with such opprobrious epithets?"

A slight color gleamed over the brow of Alice Dunscombe as she uttered in a voice that was barely audible:

"There is no longer a reason why the world should know of such a weakness, though it did exist." And as the faint glow passed away, leaving her face pale nearly as the hue of death, her eyes kindled with unusual fire, and she added: "They can but take my life, John; and that I am ready to lay down in your service!"

"Alice!" exclaimed the softened pilot, "my kind, my gentle Alice——"

The knock of the sentinel at the door was heard at this critical moment. Without waiting for a reply to his summons, the man entered the apartment, and in hurried language, declared the urgent necessity that existed for the lady to retire. A few brief remonstrances were uttered by both Alice and the pilot, who wished to comprehend more clearly each other's intentions relative to the intended escape; but the fear of personal punishment rendered the soldier obdurate, and a dread of exposure at length induced the lady to comply. She arose, and was leaving the apartment with lingering steps, when the pilot, touching her hand, whispered to her impressively:

"Alice, we meet again before I leave this island forever?"

"We meet in the morning, John," she returned in the same tone of voice, "in the apartments of Miss Howard."

He dropped her hand and she glided from the room, when the impatient sentinel closed the door, and silently turned the key on his prisoner. The pilot remained in a listening attitude, until the light footsteps of the retiring pair were no longer audible, when he paced his confined apartment with perturbed steps, occasionally pausing to look out at the driving clouds, and the groaning oaks that were trembling and rocking their broad arms in the fitful gusts of the gale. In a few minutes the tempest in his own passions had gradually subsided to the desperate and still calmness that made him the man he was; when he again seated himself where Alice had found him, and began to muse on the events of the times, from which the transition to projecting schemes of daring enterprise and mighty consequences was but the usual employment of his active and restless mind.

CHAPTER XV.

"*Sir Andrew.* I have no exquisite reason for't, but I've reason good enough."—*Twelfth Night.*

THE countenance of Captain Borroughcliffe, when the sentinel admitted him to the apartment he had selected, was in that state of doubtful illumination, when looks of peculiar cunning blend so nicely with the stare of vacancy that the human face is rendered not unlike an April day,

now smiling and inviting, and at the next moment clouded, and dreary. It was quite apparent that the soldier had an object for his unexpected visit, by the importance of his air, and the solemnity of the manner with which he entered on the business. He waved his hand for the sentinel to retire, with lofty dignity, and continued balancing his body, during the closing of the door, and while a sound continued audible to his confused faculties, with his eyes fixed in the direction of the noise, with that certain sort of wise look that in many men supplies the place of something better. When the captain felt himself secure from interruption, he moved round with quick and military precision in order to face the man of whom he was in quest. Griffith had been sleeping, though uneasily, and with watchfulness; and the pilot had been calmly awaiting the visit which it seemed he had anticipated; but their associate, who was no other than Captain Manual, of the marines, was discovered in a very different condition from either. Though the weather was cool, and the night tempestuous, he had thrown aside his pea-jacket, with most of his disguise, and was sitting ruefully on his blanket, wiping, with one hand, the large drops of sweat from his forehead, and occasionally grasping his throat with the other, with a kind of convulsed mechanical movement. He started wildly at his visitor, though his entrance produced no other alteration in these pursuits than a more diligent application of his handkerchief, and a more frequent grasping of his naked neck, as if he was willing to ascertain, by actual experiment, what degree of pressure the part was able to sustain, without exceeding a given quantity of inconvenience.

"Comrade, I greet ye!" said Borroughcliffe, staggering to the side of his prisoner, where he seated himself with an entire absence of ceremony; "comrade, I greet ye! Is the kingdom in danger, that gentlemen traverse the island in the uniform of the regiment of incognitus, incognitu, 'torum—damme, how I forget my Latin! Say, my fine fellow, are you one of these 'torums?"

Manual breathed a little hard, which, considering the manner he had been using his throat, was a thing to be expected; but, swallowing his apprehensions, he answered with more spirit than his situation rendered prudent, or the occasion demanded.

"Say what you will of me, and treat me as you please, I defy any man to call me Tory with truth."

"You are no 'torum! Well, then, the war-office has got up a new dress! Your regiment must have earned their facings in storming some water-battery, or perhaps it has done duty as marines. Am I right?"

"I'll not deny it," said Manual, more stoutly; "I have served as a marine for two years, though taken from the line of——"

"The army," said Borroughcliffe, interrupting a most damning confession of which "State line" the other belonged to. "I kept a dog-watch myself, once, on board the fleet of my Lord Howe; but it is a service that I do not envy any man. Our afternoon parades were dreadfully unsteady, for it's a time, you know, when a man wants solid ground to stand on. However, I purchased my company with some prize-money that fell in my way, and I always remember the marine service with gratitude. But this is dry work. I have put a bottle of sparkling Madeira in my pocket, with a couple of glasses, which we will discuss, while we talk over more important matters. Thrust your hand into my right pocket; I have been used to dress to the front so long, that it comes mighty awkward to me to make this backward motion, as if it were into a cartridge box."

Manual, who had been at a loss how to construe the manner of the other, perceived at once a good deal of plain English in this request, and he dislodged one of Colonel Howard's dusty bottles, with a dexterity that denoted the earnestness of his purpose. Borroughcliffe had made a suitable provision of glasses; and, extracting the cork in a certain scientific manner, he tendered to his companion a bumper of the liquor, before another syl-

lable was uttered by either of the expectants. The gentlemen concluded their draughts with a couple of smacks, that sounded not unlike the pistols of two practiced duellists, though certainly a much less alarming noise, when the entertainer renewed the discourse.

"I like one of your musty-looking bottles, that is covered with dust and cobwebs, with a good Southern tan on it," he said. "Such liquor does not abide in the stomach, but it gets into the heart at once, and becomes blood in the beating of a pulse. But how soon I knew you! That sort of knowledge is the freemasonry of our craft. I knew you to be the man you are, the moment I laid eyes on you in what we call our guard-room; but I thought I would humor the old soldier who lives here, by letting him have the formula of the examination, as a sort of deference to his age and former rank. But I knew you the instant I saw you. I have seen you before!"

The theory of Borroughcliffe, in relation to the incorporation of wine with the blood might have been true in the case of the marine, whose whole frame appeared to undergo a kind of magical change by the experiment of drinking, which, the reader will understand, was diligently persevered in, while a drop remained in the bottle. The perspiration no longer rolled from his brow, neither did his throat manifest that uneasiness which had rendered such constant external application necessary; but he settled down into an air of cool but curious interest, which, in some measure, was the necessary concomitant of his situation.

"We may have met before, as I have been much in service, and yet I know not where you could have seen me," said Manual. "Were you ever a prisoner of war?"

"Hum! not exactly such an unfortunate devil; but a sort of conventional noncombatant. I shared the hardships, the glory, the equivocal victories (where we killed and drove countless numbers of rebels—who were not), and woe is me! the capitulation of Burgoyne. But let that pass—which was more than the Yankees would allow us to do. You know not where I could have seen you? I have seen you on parade, in the field, in battle and out of battle, in camp, in barracks, in short, everywhere but in a drawing-room. No, no; I have never seen you before this night in a drawing-room!"

Manual stared in a good deal of wonder and some uneasiness at these confident assertions which promised to put his life in no little jeopardy; and it is to be supposed that the peculiar sensation about the throat was revived, as he made a heavy draft, before he said:

"You will swear to this—can you call me by name?"

"I will swear to it in any court in Christendom," said the dogmatical soldier; "and your name is—is—Fugleman!"

"If it is I'll be damned!" exclaimed the other, with exulting precipitation.

"Swear not!" said Borroughcliffe, with a solemn air; "for what mattereth an emply name! Call thyself by what appellation thou wilt, I know thee. Soldier is written on thy martial front; thy knee bendeth not; nay, I even doubt if the rebellious member bow in prayer——"

"Come, sir," interrupted Manual, a little sternly; "no more of this trifling, but declare your will at once. Rebellious member, indeed! These fellows will call the skies of America rebellious heavens shortly!"

"I like thy spirit, lad," returned the undisturbed Borroughcliffe; "it sits as gracefully on a soldier as his sash and gorget; but it is lost on an old campaigner. I marvel, however, that thou takest such umbrage at my slight attack on thy orthodoxy. I fear the fortress must be weak, where the outworks are defended with such a waste of unnecessary courage!"

"I know not why or wherefore you have paid me this visit, Captain Borroughcliffe," said Manual, with a laudable discretion, which prompted him to reconnoiter the other's views a little, before he laid himself more open; "if captain be your rank, and Borroughcliffe be your name. But this I do know, that if

it be only to mock me in my present situation, it is neither soldier-like nor manly, and it is what, in other circumstances, might be attended by some hazard."

"Hum!" said the other, with his immovable coolness; "I see you set the wine down as nothing, though the king drinks not as good; for the plain reason that the sun of England cannot find its way through the walls of Windsor Castle as easily as the sun of Carolina can warm a garret covered with cedar shingles. But I like your spirit more and more. So draw yourself up in battle array, and let us have another charge at this black bottle, when I shall lay before your military eyes a plan of the whole campaign."

Manual first bestowed an inquiring glance on his companion; when, discovering no other expression than foolish cunning, which was fast yielding before the encroaching footsteps of stupid inebriety, he quietly placed himself in the desired position. The wine was drunk, when Borroughcliffe proceeded to open his communications more unreservedly.

"You are a soldier and I am a soldier. That you are a soldier my orderly could tell; for the dog has both seen a campaign, and smelt villainous saltpeter, when compounded according to a wicked invention; but it required the officer to detect the officer. Privates do not wear such linen as this, which seemeth to me an unreasonably cool attire for the season; nor velvet stocks, with silver buckles; nor is there often the odorous flavor of sweet scented pomatum to be discovered around their greasy locks. In short, thou art both soldier and officer."

"I confess it," said Manual; "I hold the rank of captain, and shall expect the treatment of one."

"I think I have furnished you with wine fit for a general," returned Borroughcliffe; "but have your own way. Now, it would be apparent to men whose faculties had not been rendered clear by such cordials as this dwelling aboundeth with, that when you officers journey through the island, clad in the uniform incognitorum, which, in your case, means the marine corps, that something is in the wind of more than usual moment. Soldiers owe their allegiance to their prince, and, next to him, to war, women, and wine. Of war, there is none in the realm; of women, plenty; but wine, I regret to say —that is, good wine, grows both scarce and dear. Do I speak to the purpose, comrade?"

"Proceed," said Manual, whose eyes were not less attentive than his ears, in a hope to discover whether his true character were understood.

"*En avant!* in plain English, forward march! Well, the difficulty lies between women and wine; which, when the former are pretty and the latter rich, is a very agreeable sort of an alternative. That it is not wine of which you are in quest, I must believe, my comrade captain, or you would not go on the adventure in such shabby attire. You will excuse me, but who would think of putting anything better than their port before a man in a pair of tarred trousers! No! no! Hollands, green-and-yellow Hollands, is a potation good enough to set before one of the present bearing."

"And yet I have met with him who has treated me to the choicest of the south-side Madeira!"

"Know you the very side the precious fluid comes? That looks more in favor of the wine. But, after all, woman, dear, capricious woman, who one moment fancies she sees a hero in regimentals, and the next a saint in a cassock; and who always sees something admirable in a suitor, whether he be clad in tow or velvet — woman is at the bottom of this mysterious masquerading. Am I right, comrade?"

By this time Manual had discovered that he was safe, and he returned to the conversation with a revival of all his ready wits, which had been strangely paralyzed by his previous disorder in the region of the throat. First bestowing a wicked wink on his companion, and a look that would have outdone the wisest aspect of Solomon, he replied:

"Ah! woman has much to answer for!"

"I knew it," exclaimed Borroughcliffe;

"and this confession only confirms me in the good opinion I have always entertained of myself. If his Majesty has any particular wish to close this American business, let him have a certain convention burnt and a nameless person promoted, and we shall see! But answer, as you love truth; is it a business of holy matrimony, or a mere dalliance with the sweets of Cupid?"

"Of honest wedlock," said Manual, with an air as serious as if Hymen already held him in his fetters.

"'Tis honest! Is there money?"

"Is there money?" repeated Manuel, with a sort of contemptuous echo. "Would a soldier part with his liberty but with his life, unless the chains were made of gold?"

"That's the true military doctrine!" cried the other; "faith, you have some discretion in your amphibious corps, I find! But why this disguise? are the 'seniors grave,' as well as 'potent and reverend?' Why this disguise, I again ask?"

"Why this disguise?" repeated Manual, coolly. "Is there any such thing as love in your regiment without disguise? With us it is a regular symptom of the disease."

"A most just and discreet description of the passion, my amphibious comrade!" said the English officer; "and the symptoms in your case are attended by some very malignant tokens. Does your mistress love tar?"

"No, but she loveth me; and, of course, whatever attire I choose to appear in."

"Still discreet and sagacious! and yet only a most palpable feint to avoid my direct attack. You have heard of such a place as Gretna Green, a little to the north of this, I dare say, my aquatic comrade. Am I right?"

"Gretna Green!" said Manual, a little embarrassed by his ignorance; "some parade-ground, I suppose?"

"Ay, for those who suffer under the fire of Master Cupid. A parade-ground! well, there is some artful simplicity in that! But all will not do with an old campaigner. It is a difficult thing to impose on an old soldier, my water-battery. Now listen and answer; and you shall see what it is to possess a discernment—therefore deny nothing. You are in love?"

"I deny nothing," said Manual, comprehending at once that this was the safest course.

"Your mistress is willing, and the money is ready, but the old people say, halt!"

"I am still mute."

"'Tis prudent. You say march—Gretna Green is the object; and your flight is to be by water!"

"Unless I can make my escape by water, I shall never make it," said Manual, with another sympathetic movement with his hand to his throat.

"Keep mute; you need tell me nothing. I can see into a mystery that is as deep as a well, to-night. Your companions are hirelings; perhaps your shipmates; or men to pilot you on this expedition!"

"One is my shipmate, and the other is our pilot," said Manaul, with more truth than usual.

"You are well provided. One thing more, and I shall become mute in my turn. Does she whom you seek lie in this house?"

"She does not; she lies but a short distance from this place; and I should be a happy fellow could I but once more put foot——"

"Eyes on her. Now listen, and you shall have your wish. You possess the ability to march yet, which, considering the lateness of the hour, is no trifling privilege; open that window—is it possible to descend from it?"

Manual eagerly complied, but he turned from the place in disappointment.

"It would be certain death to attempt the leap. The devil only could escape from it."

"So I should think," returned Borroughcliffe, dryly. "You must be content to pass for that respectable gentleman for the rest of your days, in St. Ruth's Abbey. For through that identical hole must you wing your flight on the pinions of love."

"But how? The thing is impossible."

"In imagination only. There is some

stir, a good deal of foolish apprehension, and a great excess of idle curiosity, among certain tenants of this house, on your account. They fear the rebels, who, we all know, have not soldiers enough to do their work neatly at home, and who, of course, would never think of sending any here. You wish to be snug—I wish to serve a brother in distress. Through that window you must be supposed to fly —no matter how; while by following me you can pass the sentinel, and retire peaceably, like any other mortal, on your own two stout legs."

This was a result that exceeded all that Manual had anticipated from their amicable but droll dialogue; and the hint was hardly given before he threw on the garments that agitation had before rendered such encumbrances; and, in less time than we have taken to relate it, the marine was completely equipped for his departure. In the meantime, Captain Borroughcliffe raised himself to an extremely erect posture, which he maintained with the inflexibility of a rigid martinet. When he found himself established on his feet, the soldier intimated to his prisoner that he was ready to proceed. The door was instantly opened by Manual, and together they entered the gallery.

"Who comes there?" cried the sentinel, with a vigilance and vigor that he intended should compensate for his previous neglect of duty.

"Walk straight that he may see you," said Borroughcliffee, with much philosophy.

"Who goes there?" repeated the sentinel, throwing his musket to a poise, with a rattling sound that echoed along the naked walls.

"Walk crooked," added Borroughcliffe, "that if he fire he may miss."

"We shall be shot at with this folly," muttered Manual. "We are friends, and your officer is one of us."

"Stand friends—advance, officer, and give the countersign," said the sentinel.

"That is much easier said than done," returned his captain; "forward, Mr. Amphibious, you can walk like a postman—move to the front and proclaim the magical word, 'loyalty;' 'tis a standing countersign, ready furnished to my hands by mine host, the colonel; your road is then clear before you—but hark——"

Manual made an eager step forward, when, recollecting himself, he returned and added:

"My assistants, the seamen! I can do nothing without them."

"Lo! the keys are in the doors, ready for my admission," said the Englishman; "turn them, and bring out your forces."

Quick as thought, Manual was in the room of Griffith, to whom he briefly communicated the situation of things, when he reappeared in the passage, and then proceeded on a similar errand to the room of the pilot.

"Follow, and behave as usual," he whispered; "say not a word, but trust all to me."

The pilot arose and obeyed these instructions without asking a question, with the most admirable coolness.

"I am now ready to proceed," said Manual, when they had joined Borroughcliffe.

During the short time occupied in these arrangements, the sentinel and his captain had stood looking at each other with great military exactitude, the former ambitious of manifesting his watchfulness, the latter awaiting the return of the marine. The captain now beckoned to Manual to advance and give the countersign.

"Loyalty," whispered Manual when he approached the sentinel. But the soldier had been allowed time to reflect; and, as he well understood the situation of his officer, he hesitated to allow the prisoner to pass. After a moment's pause, he said:

"Advance friends." At this summons the whole party moved to the point of his bayonet, when the man continued: "The prisoners have the countersign, Captain Borroughcliffe, but I dare not let them pass."

"Why not?" asked the captain; "am I not here, sirrah? do you not know me?"

"Yes, sir, I know your honor and respect your honor; but I was posted here by my sergeant, and ordered not to let these men pass out on any account."

"That's what I call good discipline," said Borroughcliffe with an exulting laugh; "I knew the lad would not mind me any more than that he would obey the orders of that lamp. Here are no slaves of the lamp, my amphibious comrade; drill ye your marines in this consummate style to niceties?"

"What means this trifling?" said the pilot, sternly.

"Ah! I thought I should turn the laugh on you," cried Manual, affecting to join in the mirth; "we know all these things well, and we practice them in our corps; but though the sentinel cannot know you, the sergeant will; so let him be called, and orders be given through him to the man on post, that we may pass out."

"Your throat grows uneasy, I see," said Borroughcliffe; "you crave another bottle of the generous fluid. Well, it shall be done. Sentinel, you can throw up yon window, and give a call to the sergeant."

"The outcry will ruin us," said the pilot in a whisper to Griffith.

"Follow me," said the young sailor. The sentinel was turning to execute the orders of his captain as Griffith spoke, when, springing forward, in an instant he wrenched the musket from his hands; a heavy blow with its butt felled the astonished soldier to the floor; then, poising his weapon, Griffith exclaimed:

"Forward! we can clear our own way now!"

"On!" said the pilot, leaping lightly over the prostrate soldier, a dagger gleaming in one hand, and a pistol presented in the other.

Manual was by his side in an instant, armed in a similar manner; and the three rushed together from the building, without meeting any one to oppose their flight.

Borroughcliffe was utterly unable to follow; and so astounded was he by this sudden violence that several minutes passed before he was restored to the use of his speech, a faculty which seldom deserted him. The man had recovered his senses and his feet, however; and the two stood gazing at each other in mute condolence. At length the sentinel broke the silence:

"Shall I give the alarm, your honor?"

"I rather think not, Peters. I wonder if there be any such thing as gratitude or good-breeding in the marine corps?"

"I hope your honor will remember that I did my duty, and that I was disarmed while executing your orders."

"I can remember nothing about it, Peters, except that it is rascally treatment, and such as I shall yet make this amphibious aquatic gentleman answer for. But lock the door—look as if nothing had happened, and——"

"Ah! your honor, that is not so easily done as your honor may please to think. I have not any doubt but there is the print of the breech of a musket stamped on my back and shoulders, as plainly to be seen as that light."

"Then look as you please; but hold your peace, sirrah. Here is a crown to buy a plaster. I heard the dog throw away your musket on the stairs—go seek it, and return to your post; and when you are relieved, act as if nothing had happened. I take the responsibility on myself."

The man obeyed; and, when he was once more armed, Borroughcliffe, a good deal sobered by the surprise, made the best of his way to his own apartment, muttering threats and execrations against the "corps of the marines and the whole race," as he called them, "of aquatic amphibii."

CHAPTER XVI.

"Away! away! the covey's fled the cover,
Put forth the dogs, and let the falcon fly—
I'll spend some leisure in the keen pursuit,
Nor longer waste my hours in sluggish quiet."

THE soldier passed the remainder of the night in the heavy sleep of a bacchanalian, and awoke late on the following morning, only when aroused by the entrance of his servant. When the customary summons had induced the captain to unclose his eyelids, he arose in his bed, and, after performing the usual operation of a diligent friction on his organs of vision, he turned sternly to his man, and remarked, with an ill-humor that seemed to implicate the

innocent servant in the fault which his master condemned:

"I thought, sirrah, that I ordered Sergeant Drill not to let a drumstick touch a sheepskin while we quartered in the dwelling of this hospitable old colonel! Does the fellow despise my commands? or does he think the roll of a drum, echoing through the crooked passages of St. Ruth, a melody that is fit to disturb the slumbers of its inmates?"

"I believe, sir," returned the man, "it was the wish of Colonel Howard himself that on this occasion the sergeant should turn out the guard by the roll of the drum."

"The devil it was! I see the old fellow loves to tickle the drum of his own ear now and then with familiar sounds; but have you had a muster of the cattle from the farm-yard too, as well as a parade of the guard? I hear the trampling of feet, as if the old Abbey were a second ark, and all the beasts of the field were coming aboard of us!"

"'Tis nothing but the party of dragoons from ——, who are wheeling in the court-yard, sir, where the colonel has gone out to receive them."

"Court-yard! light dragoons!" repeated Borroughcliffe in amazement; "and has it come to this, that twenty stout fellows of the ——th are not enough to guard such a rookery as this old Abbey against the ghosts and northeast storms, but we must have horse to re-enforce us? Hum! I suppose some of these booted gentlemen have heard of this South Carolina Madeira."

"Oh, no, sir!" cried his man; "it is only the party that Mr. Dillion went to seek last evening, after you saw fit, sir, to put the three pirates in irons."

"Pirates in irons!" said Borroughcliffe, again passing his hands over his eyes, though in a more reflecting manner than before; "ha! oh! I remember to have put three suspicious looking rascals in the black hole, or some such place; but what can Mr. Dillon or the light dragoons have to do with these fellows?"

"That we do not know, sir; but it is said below, sir, as some suspicions had fallen on their being conspirators and rebels from the colonies, and that they were great officers and Tories in disguise; some said that one was General Washington, and others that it was only three members of the Yankee Parliament, come over to get our good old English fashions to set themselves up with."

"Washington! Members of Congress! Go—go, simpleton, and learn how many these troopers muster and what halt they make; but stay, place my clothes near me. Now, do as I bid you, and if the dragoon-officer inquire for me, make my respects, and tell him I shall be with him soon. Go, fellow, go!"

When the man left the room, the captain, while he proceeded with the business of the toilet, occasionally gave utterance to the thoughts that crowded on his recol lection, after the manner of a soliloquy:

"Ay! my commission to a half-pay ensigncy, that some of these lazy fellows, who must have a four-legged beast to carry them to the wars, have heard of the 'south side.' South side! I believe I must put an advertisement in the London *Gazette*, calling that amphibious soldier to an account. If he be a true man, he will not hide himself under his incognito, but will give me a meeting. If that should fail, damme, I'll ride across to Yarmouth, and call out the first of the mongrel breed that I fall in with. 'Sdeath! was ever such an insult practiced on a gentleman and a soldier before? Would that I only knew his name! Why, if the tale should get abroad, I shall be the standing joke of the mess-table until some greater fool than myself can be found. It would cost me at least six duels to get rid of it. No, no; not a trigger will I pull in my own regiment about the silly affair: but I'll have a crack at some marine in very revenge; for that is no more than reasonable. That Peters! if the scoundrel should dare whisper anything of the manner in which he was stamped with the breech of a musket! I can't flog him for it; but if I don't make it up to him the first time he gives me a chance, I am ignorant of the true art of balancing regimental accounts."

By the time the recruiting officer had concluded this soliloquy, which affords a very fair exposition of the current of his thoughts, he was prepared to meet the newcomers, and he accordingly descended to the court-yard, as in duty bound, to receive them in his proper person. Borroughcliffe encountered his host in earnest conversation with a young man in cavalry uniform, in the principal entrance of the Abbey, and was greeted by the former with:

"A good-morning to you, my worthy guard and protector! here is rare news for your royal ears. It seems that our prisoners are enemies to the king in disguise; and, Cornet Fitzgerald — Captain Borroughcliffe, of the ——th, permit me to make you acquainted with Mr. Fitzgerald, of the ——th light dragoons." While the soldiers exchanged their salutations the old man continued: "The cornet has been kind enough to lead down a detachment of his troop to escort the rogues up to London, or some other place, where they will find enough good and loyal officers to form a court-martial that can authorize their execution as spies. Christopher Dillon, my worthy kinsman Kit, saw into their real characters at a glance; while you and I, like two unsuspecting boys, thought the rascals would have made fit men to serve the king. But Kit has an eye and a head that few enjoy like him, and I would that he might receive his dues at the English bar."

"It is to be desired, sir," said Borroughcliffe, with a grave aspect that was produced chiefly by his effort to give effect to his sarcasm, but a little, also, by the recollection of the occurrences that were yet to be explained; "but what reason has Mr. Christopher Dillon to believe that the three seamen are more or less than they seem?"

"I know not what; but a good and sufficient reason, I will venture my life," cried the colonel; "Kit is a lad for reasons, which you know is the foundation of his profession, and knows how to deliver them manfully in the proper place; but you know, gentlemen, that the members of the bar cannot assume the open and bold front that becomes a soldier without often endangering the cause in which they are concerned. No, no; trust me, Kit has his reasons, and in good time will he deliver them."

"I hope, then," said the captain, carelessly, "that it may be found that we have had a proper watch on our charge, Colonel Howard; I think you told me the windows were too high for an escape in that direction, for I had no sentinel outside of the building."

"Fear nothing, my worthy friend," cried his host; "unless your men have slept, instead of watching, we have them safe; but, as it will be necessary to convey them away before any of the civil authority can lay hands on them, let us proceed to the rear and unkennel the dogs. A party of the horse might proceed at once with them to —— while we are breaking our fasts. It would be no very wise thing to allow the civilians to deal with them, for they seldom have a true idea of the nature of the crime."

"Pardon me, sir," said the young officer of horse; "I was led to believe, by Mr. Dillon, that we might meet with a party of the enemy in some little force, and that I should find a pleasanter duty than that of constable; besides, sir, the laws of the realm guarantee to the subject a trial of his peers, and it is more than I dare do to carry the men to the barracks, without first taking them before a magistrate."

"Ay! you speak of loyal and dutiful subjects," said the colonel; "and, as respects them, doubtless, you are right; but such privileges are withheld from enemies and traitors."

"It must first be proved that they are such, before they can receive the treatment or the punishment that they merit," returned the young man, a little positively, who felt the more confidence because he had only left the Temple a year before. "If I take charge of the men at all, it will be only to transfer them safely to the city authority."

"Let us go and see the prisoners," cried Borroughcliffe, with a view to terminate a discussion that was likely to wax warm, and which he knew to be useless; "per-

haps they may quietly enroll themselves under the banners of our sovereign, when all other interference save that of wholesome discipline will become unnecessary."

"Nay, if they are of a rank in life to render such a step probable," returned the cornet, "I am well content that the matter should be settled. I trust, however, that Captain Borroughcliffe will consider that the ——th light dragoons has some merit in this affair, and that we are far short of our numbers in the second squadron."

"We shall not be difficult at a compromise," said the captain; "there is one apiece for us, and a toss of a guinea shall determine who has the third man. Sergeant! follow to deliver over your prisoners, and relieve your sentry."

As they proceeded, in compliance with this arrangement, to the building in the rear, Colonel Howard, who made one of the party, observed:

"I dispute not the penetration of Captain Borroughcliffe, but I understand from Mr. Christopher Dillon that there is reason to believe one of these men, at least, to be of a class altogether above that of a common soldier; in which case your plans may fall to the ground."

"And who does he deem the gentleman to be?" asked Borroughcliffe—"a Bourbon in disguise, or a secret representative of the rebel Congress?"

"Nay, nay: he said nothing more; my kinsman Kit keeps a close mouth whenever Dame Justice is about to balance her scales. There are men who may be said to have been born to be soldiers; of which number I should call the Earl Cornwallis, who makes such head against the rebels in the two Carolinas; others seem to be intended by Nature for divines and saints on earth, such as their graces of York and Canterbury; while another class appear as if it were impossible for them to behold things unless with discriminating, impartial and disinterested eyes; to which, I should say, belong my Lord Chief Justice Mansfield and my kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon. I trust, gentlemen, that, when the royal arms have crushed this rebellion, his Majesty's ministers will see the propriety of extending the dignity of the peerage to the colonies, as a means of reward to the loyal, and a measure of policy to prevent further disaffection, in which case I hope to see my kinsman decorated with the ermine of justice bordering the mantle of a peer."

"Your expectations, my excellent sir, are right reasonable; as I doubt not your kinsman will become at some future day, that which he is not at present, unhappily for his deserts, right honorable," said Borroughcliffe. "But be of good heart, sir; from what I have seen of his merits, I doubt not that the law will yet have its revenge in due season, and that we shall be properly edified and instructed how to attain elevation in life, by the future exaltation of Mr. Christopher Dillon; though by what title he is to be then known I am at a loss to say."

Colonel Howard was too much occupied with his own *ex-parte* views of the war and things in general, to observe the shrewd looks that were exchanged between the soldiers; but he answered with perfect simplicity:

"I have reflected much on that point, and have come to the opinion that, as he has a small estate on that river, he should cause his first barony to be known by the title of 'Pedee.'"

"Barony!" echoed Borroughcliffe; "I trust the new nobles of a new world will disdain the old, worn-out distinctions of a hackneyed universe—eschew all baronies, mine host, and cast earldoms and dukedoms to the shades. The immortal Locke has unlocked his fertile mind to furnish you with appellations suited to the originality of your condition and the nature of your country. Ah! here comes the Cacique of Pedee, in his proper person!"

As Borroughcliffe spoke they were ascending the flight of stone steps which led to the upper apartments, where the prisoners were still supposed to be confined, and, at the same moment, the sullen, gloomy features of Dillon were seen as he advanced along the lower passage, with an expression of malicious exultation hovering above his dark brow that denoted his secret satisfaction. As

the hours passed away the period had come round when the man who had been present at the escape of Griffith and his friends was again posted to perform the duty of sentinel. As this soldier well knew the situation of his trust, he was very coolly adjusted, with his back against the wall, endeavoring to compensate himself for his disturbed slumbers during the night, when the sounds of the approaching footsteps warned him to assume the appearance of watchfulness.

"How now, fellow!" cried Borroughcliffe; "what have you to say to your charge?"

"I believe the men sleep, your honor; for I have heard no noises from the rooms since I relieved the last sentinel."

"The lads are weary, and are right to catch what sleep they can in their comfortable quarters," returned the captain. "Stand to your arms, sirrah! and throw back your shoulders, and do not move like a crab, or a train-band corporal; do you not see an officer of horse coming up? Would you disgrace your regiment?"

"Ah! your honor, heaven only knows whether I shall ever get my shoulders even again."

"Buy another plaster," said Borroughcliffe, slipping a shilling into his hand; "observe, you know nothing but your duty."

"Which is, your honor——"

"To mind me, and be silent. But here comes the sergeant with his guard; he will relieve you."

The rest of the party stopped at the other end of the gallery, to allow a few files of soldiers who were led by the orderly to pass them, when they all moved toward the prisoners in a body. The sentinel was relieved in due military style; when Dillon placed his hand on one of the doors, and said, with a malicious sneer:

"Open here first, Mr. Sergeant; this cage holds the man we most want."

"Softly, softly, my lord chief-justice, and most puissant cacique," said the captain; "the hour has not yet come to empanel a jury of fat yeomen, and no man must interfere with my boys but myself."

"The rebuke is harsh, I must observe, Captain Borroughcliffe," said the colonel; "but I pardon it because it is military. No, no, Kit; these nice points must be left to martial usages. Be not impatient, my cousin; I doubt not the hour will come when you shall hold the scales of justice, and satisfy your loyal longings on many a traitor. Zounds! I could almost turn executioner myself in such a cause!"

"I can curb my impatience, sir," said Dillon, with hypocritical meekness, and great self-command, though his eyes were gleaming with savage exultation. "I beg pardon of Captain Borroughcliffe, if, in my desire to render the civil authority superior to the military, I have trespassed on your customs."

"You see, Borroughcliffe!" exclaimed the colonel, exultingly, "the lad is ruled by an instinct in all matters of law and justice. I hold it to be impossible that a man thus endowed can ever become a disloyal subject. But our breakfast waits, and Mr. Fitzgerald has breathed his horse this cool morning; let us proceed at once to the examination."

Borroughcliffe motioned to the sergeant to open the door, and the whole party entered the vacant room.

"Your prisoner has escaped!" cried the cornet, after a single moment employed in making sure of the fact.

"Never! it must not, shall not be!" cried Dillon, quivering with rage, as he glanced his eyes furiously around the apartment; "here has been treachery, and foul treason to the king!"

"By whom committed, Mr. Christopher Dillon?" said Borroughcliffe, knitting his brow, and speaking in a suppressed tone. "Dare you, or any man living, charge treason to the ——th?"

A very different feeling from rage appeared now to increase the shivering propensities of the future judge, who at once perceived it was necessary to moderate his passion; and he returned, as it were by magic, to his former plausible and insinuating manner, as he replied:

"Colonel Howard will understand the cause of my warm feelings, when I tell him that this very room contained, last

night, that disgrace to his name and country, as well as traitor to his king, Edward Griffith, of the rebel navy."

"What!" exclaimed the colonel, starting, "has that recreant youth dared to pollute the threshold of St. Ruth with his footstep? But you dream, Kit; there would be too much hardihood in the act."

"It appears not, sir," returned the other; "for, though in this very apartment he most certainly was, he is here no longer. And yet from this window, though open, escape would seem to be impossible, even with much assistance."

"If I thought that the contumelious boy had dared to be guilty of such an act of gross impudence," cried the colonel, "I should be tempted to resume my arms, in my old age, to punish his effrontery. What! is it not enough that he entered my dwelling in the colony, availing himself of the distraction of the times, with an intent to rob me of my choicest jewel—ay? gentlemen, even of my brother Harry's daughter—but that he must also invade this hallowed island with a like purpose, thus thrusting his treason, as it were, into the presence of his abused prince! No, no, Kit, thy loyalty misleads thee; he has never dared to do the deed!"

"Listen, sir, and you shall be convinced," returned the pliant Christopher. "I do not wonder at your unbelief; but as a good testimony is the soul of justice, I cannot resist its influence. You know that two vessels, corresponding in appearance to the two rebel cruisers that annoyed us so much in the Carolinas, have been seen on the coast for several days, which induced us to beg the protection of Captain Borroughcliffe. Three men are found, the day succeeding that on which we hear that these vessels came within the shoals, stealing through the grounds of St. Ruth, in sailors' attire. They are arrested, and in the voice of one of them, sir, I immediately detected that of the traitor Griffith. He was disguised, it is true, and cunningly so; but when a man has devoted his whole life to the business of investigating truth," he added, with an air of much modesty, "it is difficult to palm any disguise on his senses."

Colonel Howard was strongly impressed with the probability of these conjectures, and the closing appeal confirmed him immediately in his kinsman's opinion, while Borroughcliffe listened with deep interest to the speakers, and more than once bit his lip with vexation. When Dillon concluded, the soldier exclaimed:

"I'll swear there was a man among them who has been used to the drill."

"Nothing more probable, my worthy friend," said Dillon; "for, as the landing was never made without some evil purpose, rely on it, he came not unguarded or unprotected. I dare say the three were all officers, and one of them might have been of the marines. That they had assistance is certain, and it was because I felt assured they had a force secreted at hand that I went in quest of the re-enforcement."

There was so much plausibility, and, in fact, so much truth in all this, that conviction was unwillingly admitted by Borroughcliffe, who walked aside a moment, to conceal the confusion which, in spite of his ordinary inflexibility of countenance, he felt was manifesting itself in his rubric visage, while he muttered:

"The amphibious dog! he was a soldier, but a traitor and an enemy. No doubt he will have a marvelous satisfaction in delighting the rebellious ears of his messmates by rehearsing the manner in which he poured cold water down the back of one Borroughcliffe, of the ——th, who was amusing him, at the same time, by pouring good, rich, south-side Madeira down his own rebellious throat. I have a good mind to exchange my scarlet coat for a blue-jacket, on purpose to meet the sly rascal on the other element, where we can discuss the matter over again. Well, sergeant, do you find the other two?"

"They are gone together, your honor," returned the orderly, who just then reentered from an examination of the other apartments; "and, unless the evil one helped them off, it's a mysterious business to me."

"Colonel Howard," said Borroughcliffe, gravely, "your precious south-side cordial must be banished from the board, regularly with the cloth, until I have my revenge; for satisfaction of this insult is mine to claim, and I seek it this instant. Go, Drill; detain a guard for the protection of the house, and feed the rest of your command, then beat the general, and we will take the field. Ay! my worthy veteran host, for the first time since the days of the unlucky Charles Stuart, there shall be a campaign in the heart of England."

"Ah! rebellion, rebellion! accursed, unnatural, unholy rebellion, caused the calamity then and now!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Had I not better take a hasty refreshment for my men and their horses?" asked the cornet, "and then make a sweep for a few miles along the coast? It may be my luck to encounter the fugitives or some part of their force."

"You have anticipated my very thoughts," returned Borroughcliffe. "The Cacique of Pedee may close the gates of St. Ruth, and, by barring the windows, and arming the servants, he can make a very good defense against an attack, should they think proper to assail our fortress; after he has repulsed them, leave it to me to cut off their retreat."

Dillon but little relished this proposal; for he thought an attempt to storm the Abbey would be the most probable course adopted by Griffith, in order to rescue his mistress; and the jurist had none of the spirit of a soldier in his composition. In truth, it was this deficiency that had induced him to depart in person, the preceding night, in quest of the re-enforcement, instead of sending an express on the errand. But the necessity of devising an excuse for a change in this dangerous arrangement was obviated by Colonel Howard, who explained, as soon as Borroughcliffe concluded his plan:

"To me, Captain Borroughcliffe, belongs, of right, the duty of defending St. Ruth, and it shall be no boy's play to force my works; but Kit would rather try his chance in the open field, I know. Come, let us to our breakfast, and then he shall mount, and act as a guide to the horse, along the difficult passes of the seashore."

"To breakfast then let it be," cried the captain; "I distrust not my new commander of the fortress; and in the field the cacique forever! We follow you, my worthy host."

This arrangement was hastily executed in all its parts. The gentlemen swallowed their meal in the manner of men who ate only to sustain nature and as a duty; after which the whole house became a scene of bustling activity. The troops were mustered and paraded; Borroughcliffe, setting apart a guard for the building, placed himself at the head of the remainder of his little party, and they moved out of the courtyard in open order and at quick time. Dillon joyfully beheld himself mounted on one of the best of Colonel Howard's hunters, where he knew that he had the control, in a great measure, of his own destiny, his bosom throbbing with a powerful desire to destroy Griffith, while he entertained a lively wish to effect his object without incurring any personal risk. At his side was the young cornet, seated with practiced grace in his saddle, who, after giving time for the party of foot-soldiers to clear the premises, glanced his eye along the few files he led, and then gave the word to move. The little division of horse wheeled briskly into open column, and, the officer touching his hat to Colonel Howard, they dashed through the gateway together and pursued their route towards the sea-side at a hand-gallop.

The veteran lingered a few minutes while the clattering of hoofs was to be heard, or the gleam of arms was visible, to hear and gaze on sounds and sights that he still loved; after which he proceeded, in person, and not without a secret enjoyment ot the excitement, to barricade the doors and windows, with an undaunted determination of making, in case of need, a stout defense.

St. Ruth lay but a short two miles from the ocean; to which the numerous roads led, through the grounds of the Abbey, which extended to the shore. Along one of these paths Dillon conducted his party,

until, after a few minutes of hard riding, they approached the cliffs, when, posting his troops under cover of a little copse, the cornet advanced with his guide to the verge of the perpendicular rocks, whose bases were washed by the foam that still whitened the waters from the surges of the subsiding sea.

The gale had broken before the escape of the prisoners; and, as the power of the eastern tempest had gradually diminished, a light current from the south, that blew directly along the land, prevailed; and, though the ocean still rolled in fearful billows, their surfaces were smooth, and they were becoming, at each moment, less precipitous and more regular. The eyes of the horsemen were cast in vain over the immense expanse of water that was glistening brightly under the rays of the sun, which had just risen from its bosom, in quest of some object, or distant sail, that might confirm their suspicions, or relieve their doubts. But everything of that description appeared to have avoided the dangerous navigation during the violence of the late tempest, and Dillon was withdrawing his eyes in disappointment from the vacant view, when, as they fell toward the shore, he beheld that which caused him to exclaim:

"There they go! and, by Heaven, they will escape!"

The cornet looked in the direction of the other's finger, when he beheld, at a short distance from the land, and apparently immediately under his feet, a little boat that looked like a dark shell upon the water, rising and sinking amid the waves, as if the men it obviously contained were resting on their oars in idle expectation.

"'Tis they!" continued Dillon; "or, what is more probable, it is their boat waiting to convey them to their vessel; no common business would induce seamen to lie in this careless manner within such a narrow distance of the surf."

"And what is to done? They cannot be made to feel horse where they are; nor would the muskets of the foot be of any use. A light three-pounder would do its work handsomely on them!"

The strong desire which Dillon entertained to intercept, or rather to destroy, the party, rendered him prompt at expedients. After a moment of musing, he replied:

"The runaways must yet be on the land; and by scouring the coast, and posting men at proper intervals, their retreat can easily be prevented; in the meantime I will ride under the spur to —— Bay, where one of his majesty's cutters now lies at anchor. It is but half an hour of hard riding, and I can be on board of her. The wind blows directly in her favor; and, if we can once bring her down behind that headland, we shall infallibly cut off or sink these midnight depredators.

"Off, then!" cried the cornet, whose young blood was boiling for a skirmish; "you will at least drive them to the shore, where I can deal with them."

The words were hardly uttered before Dillon, after galloping furiously along the cliffs, and turning short into a thick wood that lay in his route, was out of sight. The loyalty of this gentleman was altogether of a calculating nature, and was intimately connected with what he considered his fealty to himself. He believed that the possession of Miss Howard's person and fortune were advantages that would much more than counterbalance any elevation that he was likely to obtain by the revolution of affairs in his native colony. He considered Griffith as the only natural obstacle to his success; and he urged his horse forward with a desperate determination to work the ruin of the young sailor before another sun had set. When a man labors in an evil cause, with such feelings, and with such incentives, he seldom slights or neglects his work; and Mr. Dillon, accordingly, was on board the *Alacrity* several minutes short of the time in which he had promised to perform the distance.

The plain old seaman who commanded the cutter listened to his tale with cautious ears, and examined into the state of the weather, and other matters connected with his duty, with the slow and deliberate decision of one who had never done much to acquire a confidence in himself, and who had been but niggardly rewarded for the little he had actually performed.

As Dillon was urgent, however, and the day seemed propitious, he at length decided to act as he was desired, and the cutter was accordingly gotten under way.

A crew of something less than fifty men moved with no little of their commander's deliberation; but as the little vessel rounded the point behind which she had been anchored, her guns were cleared, and the usual preparations were completed for immediate and actual service.

Dillon, sorely against his will, was compelled to continue on board, in order to point out the place where the unsuspecting boatmen were expected to be entrapped. Everything being ready, when they had gained a safe distance from the land, the *Alacrity* was kept away before the wind, and glided along the shore with a swift and easy progress, that promised a speedy execution of the business in which her commander had embarked.

CHAPTER XVII.

"*Polonius.* Very like a whale."—SHAKESPEARE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the object of their expedition was of a public nature, the feelings which had induced both Griffith and Barnstable to accompany the pilot with so much willingness, it will easily be seen, were entirely personal. The short intercourse that he had maintained with his associates enabled the mysterious leader of their party to understand the characters of his two principal officers so thoroughly as to induce him, when he landed with the purpose of reconnoitering to ascertain whether the objects of his pursuit still held their determination to assemble at the appointed hour, to choose Griffith aud Manual as his only associates, leaving Barnstable in command of his own vessel, to await their return and to cover their retreat. A good deal of argument, and some little of the authority of his superior officer, was necessary to make Barnstable quietly acquiesce in this arrangement; but as his good sense told him that nothing should be unnecessarily hazarded, until the moment to strike the final blow had arrived, he became gradually more resigned; taking care, however, to caution Griffith to reconnoiter the Abbey while his companion was reconnoitering —— house. It was the strong desire of Griffith to comply with this injunction, which carried them a little out of their proper path, and led to the consequences that we have partly related. The evening of that day was the time when the pilot intended to complete his enterprise, thinking to entrap his game while enjoying the festivities that usually succeeded their sports; and an early hour in the morning was appointed, when Barnstable should appear at the nearest point to the Abbey to take off his countrymen, in order that they might be as little as possible subjected to the gaze of their enemies by daylight. If they failed to arrive at the appointed time, his instructions were to return to his schooner, which lay snugly embayed in a secret and retired haven, that but few ever approached either by land or water.

While the young cornet still continued gazing at the whale boat (for it was the party from the schooner that he saw), the hour expired for the appearance of Griffith and his companions; and Barnstable reluctantly determined to comply with the letter of his instructions, and leave them to their own sagacity and skill to regain the *Ariel*. The boat had been suffered to ride in the edge of the surf, since the appearance of the sun; and the eyes of her crew were kept anxiously fixed on the cliffs, though in vain, to discover the signal that was to call them to the place of landing. After looking at his watch for the twentieth time, and as often casting glances of uneasy dissatisfaction toward the shore, the lieutenant exclaimed:

"A charming prospect this, Master Coffin, but rather too much poetry in it for your taste; I believe you relish no land that is of a harder consistency than mud!"

"I was born on the waters, sir," returned the cockswain, from his snug abode, where he was bestowed with his usual economy of room, "and it's according to all things for a man to love his

native soil. I'll not deny, Captain Barnstable, but I would rather drop my anchor on a bottom that won't broom a keel, though, at the same time, I harbor no great malice against dry land."

"I shall never forgive it, myself, if any accident has befallen Griffith in this excursion," rejoined the lieutenant; "his pilot may be a better man on the water than on *terra firma*, Long Tom."

The cockswain turned his solemn visage, with an extraordinary meaning, toward his commander, before he replied:

"For as long a time as I have followed the waters, sir, and that has been ever since I've drawn my rations, seeing that I was born while the boat was crossing Nantucket shoals, I've never known a pilot come off in greater need than the one we fell in with when we made that stretch or two on the land, in the dog-watch of yesterday."

"Ay! the fellow has played his part like a man; the occasion was great, and it seems that he was quite equal to his work."

"The frigate's people tell me, sir, that he handled the ship like a top," continued the cockswain; "but she is a ship that is a nateral inimy of the bottom!"

"Can you say as much for this boat, Master Coffin?" cried Barnstable; "keep her out of the surf, or you'll have us rolling in upon the beach, presently, like an empty water-cask; you must remember that we cannot all wade, like yourself, in two-fathom water."

The cockswain cast a cool glance at the crests of foam that were breaking over the tops of the billows, within a few yards of where their boat was riding, and called aloud to his men:

"Pull a stroke or two; away with her into dark water."

The drop of the oars resembled the movements of a nice machine, and the light boat skimmed along the water like a duck, that approaches to the very brink of some imminent danger, and then avoids it, at the most critical moment, apparently without an effort. While this necessary movement was making, Barnstable arose and surveyed the cliffs with keen eyes, and then, turning once more in disappointment from his search, he said:

"Pull more from the land, and let her run down at an easy stroke to the schooner. Keep a lookout at the cliffs, boys; it is possible that they are stowed in some of the holes in the rocks, for it's no daylight business they are on."

The order was promptly obeyed, and they had glided along for nearly a mile in this manner, in the most profound silence, when suddenly the stillness was broken by a heavy rush of air, and a dash of the water, seemingly at no great distance from them.

"By Heaven, Tom," cried Barnstable, starting, "there is the blow of a whale!"

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the cockswain, with undisturbed composure; "here is his spout not half a mile to seaward; the easterly gale has driven the creater to leeward, and he begins to find himself in shoal water. He's been sleeping, while he should have been working to windward!"

"The fellow takes it coolly, too; he's in no hurry to get an offing!"

"I rather conclude, sir," said the cockswain, rolling over his tobacco in his mouth, very composedly, while his little sunken eyes began to twinkle with pleasure at the sight, "the gentleman has lost his reckoning, and don't know which way to head to take himself back into blue water."

"'Tis a fin-back!" exclaimed the lieutenant; "he will soon make headway, and be off."

"No, sir, 'tis a right whale," answered Tom; "I saw his spout; he threw up a pair of as pretty rainbows as a Christian would wish to look at. He's a real oil-butt, that fellow!"

Barnstable laughed, turned himself away from the tempting sight, and tried to look at the cliffs; and then unconsciously bent his longing eyes again on the sluggish animal, who was throwing his huge carcass, at times, for many feet from the water, in idle gambols. The temptation for sport, and the recollection of his early habits, at length prevailed over his anxiety in behalf of his friends, and the young officer inquired of his cockswain:

"Is there any whale-line in the boat, to make fast to that harpoon which you bear about with you in fair weather or foul?"

"I never trust the boat from the schooner without part of a shot, sir," returned the cockswain; "there is something nateral in the sight of a tub to my old eyes."

Barnstable looked at his watch, and again at the cliffs, when he exclaimed, in joyous tones:

"Give strong way, my hearties! There seems nothing better to be done; let us have a stroke of a harpoon at this impudent rascal!"

The men shouted spontaneously, and the old cockswain suffered his solemn visage to relax into a small laugh, while the whale-boat sprang forward like a courser for the goal. During the few minutes they were pulling toward their game, Long Tom arose from his crouching attitude in the stern-sheets, and transferred his huge form to the bows of the boat, where he made such preparations to strike the whale as the occasion required. The tub, containing about half of a whale-line, was placed at the feet of Barnstable, who had been preparing an oar to steer with in place of the rudder, which was unshipped, in order that if necessary the boat might be whirled around when not advancing.

Their approach was utterly unnoticed by the monster of the deep, who continued to amuse himself with throwing the water in two circular spouts high into the air, occasionally flourishing the broad flukes of his tail with a graceful but terrific force, until the hardy seamen were within a few hundred feet of him, when he suddenly cast his head downward, and, without an apparent effort, reared his immense body for many feet above the water, waving his tail violently, and producing a whizzing noise that sounded like the rushing of winds.

The cockswain stood erect, poising his harpoon, ready for the blow; but when he beheld the creature assume this formidable attitude, he waved his hand to his commander, who instantly signed to his men to cease rowing. In this situation the sportsmen rested for a few moments, while the whale struck several blows on the water in rapid succession, the noise of which re-echoed along the cliffs like the hollow reports of so many cannon. After this wanton exhibition of his terrible strength, the monster sank again into his native element and slowly disappeared from the eyes of his pursuers.

"Which way did he head, Tom?" cried Barnstable, the moment the whale was ought of sight.

"Pretty much up and down, sir," returned the cockswain, whose eye was gradually brightening with the excitement of the sport; "he'll soon run his nose against the bottom if he stands long on that course, and will be glad to get another snuff of pure air. Send her a few fathoms to starboard, sir, and I promise we shall not be out of his track."

The conjecture of the experienced old seaman proved true; for in a few moments the water broke near them, and another spout was cast into the air, when the huge animal rushed for half his length in the same direction, and fell on the sea with a turbulence and foam equal to that which is produced by the launching of a vessel for the first time into its proper element. After this evolution the whale rolled heavily, and seemed to rest from further efforts.

His slightest movements were closely watched by Barnstable and his cockswain, and when he was in a state of comparative rest, the former gave a signal to his crew to ply their oars once more. A few long and vigorous strokes sent the boat directly up to the broadside of the whale, with its bows pointing toward one of the fins, which was at times, as the animal yielded sluggishly to the action of the waves, exposed to view. The cockswain poised his harpoon with much precision and then darted it from him with a violence that buried the iron in the blubber of their foe. The instant the blow was made Long Tom shouted with singular earnestness:

"Starn all!"

"Stern all!" echoed Barnstable, when the obedient seamen, by united efforts, forced the boat in a backward direction

beyond the reach of any blow from their formidable antagonist. The alarmed animal, however, meditated no such resistance; ignorant of his own power and of the insignificance of his enemies, he sought refuge in flight. One moment of stupid surprise succeeded the entrance of the iron, when he cast his huge tail into the air with a violence that threw the sea around him into increased commotion, and then disappeared with the quickness of lightning amid a cloud of foam.

"Snub him!" shouted Barnstable; "hold on, Tom, he rises already."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the composed cockswain, seizing the line, which was running out of the boat with a velocity that rendered such a maneuver rather hazardous, and causing it to yield more gradually round the large loggerhead that was placed in the bows of the boat for that purpose. Presently the line stretched forward, and rising to the surface with tremulous vibrations, it indicated the direction in which the animal might be expected to reappear. Barnstable had cast the bows of the boat toward that point before the terrified and wounded victim rose once more to the surface, whose time was, however, no longer wasted in his sports, but who cast the waters aside as he forced his way with prodigious velocity along the surface. The boat was dragged violently in his wake, and cut through the billows with a terrific rapidity, that at moments appeared to bury the slight fabric in the ocean. When Long Tom beheld his victim throwing his sprouts on high again, he pointed with exultation to the jetting fluid, which was streaked with the deep red of blood, and cried:

"Ay, I've touched the fellow's life! it must be more than two feet of blubber that stops my iron from reaching the life of any whale that ever sculled the ocean!"

"I believe you have saved yourself the trouble of using the bayonet you have rigged for a lance," said his commander, who entered into the sport with all the ardor of one whose youth had been chiefly passed in such pursuits—"Feel your line, Master Coffin; can we haul alongside of our enemy? I like not the course he is steering, as he tows us from the schooner."

"'Tis the creater's way, sir," said the cockswain; "you know they need the air in their nostrils, when they run, the same as a man—but lay hold, boys, and let's haul up to him."

The seamen now seized the whale-line, and slowly drew their boat to within a few feet of the tail of the fish, whose progress became sensibly less rapid, as he grew weak with the loss of blood. In a few minutes he stopped running, and appeared to roll uneasily on the water, as if suffering the agony of death.

"Shall we pull in and finish him, Tom?" cried Barnstable; "a few sets from your bayonet will do it."

The cockswain stood examining his game with cool discretion, and replied to his interrogatory:

"No, sir, no—he's going into his flurry; there's no occasion for disgracing ourselves by using a soldier's weapon in taking a whale. Starn off, sir, starn off, the creater's in his flurry!"

The warning of the prudent cockswain was promptly obeyed, and the boat cautiously drew off to a distance, leaving to the animal a clear space while under its dying agonies. From a state of perfect rest, the terrible monster threw its tail on high, as when in sport, but its blows were trebled in rapidity and violence, till all was hid from view by a pyramid of foam, that was deeply dyed with blood. The roarings of the fish were like the bellowing of a herd of bulls; and to one who was ignorant of the fact, it would have appeared as if a thousand monsters were engaged in deadly combat, behind the bloody mist that obstructed the view. Gradually, these efforts subsided, and when the discolored water again settled down to the long and regular swell of the ocean, the fish was seen, exhausted, and yielding passively to its fate. As life departed, the enormous black mass rolled to one side; and, when the white and glistening skin of the belly became apparent, the seamen well knew that their victory was achieved.

"What's to be done now?" said Barnstable, as he stood and gazed with a diminished excitement at their victim; "he will yield no food, and his carcass will probably drift to land, and furnish our enemies with the oil."

"If I had but the creater in Boston Bay," said the cockswain, "it would prove the making of me; but such is my luck forever! Pull up, at any rate, and let me get my harpoon and line—the English shall never get them while old Tom Coffin can blow."

"Don't speak too fast," said the strokesman of the boat; "whether he get your iron or not, here he comes in chase!"

"What mean you, fellow?" cried Barnstable.

"Captain Barnstable can look for himself," returned the seaman, "and tell whether I speak truth."

The young sailor turned and saw the *Alacrity* bearing down before the wind, with all her sails set, as she rounded a headland but a short half league to windward of the place where the boat lay.

"Pass that glass to me," said the captain, with steady composure. "This promises us work in one of two ways; if she be armed, it has become our turn to run; if not, we are strong enough to carry her."

A very brief survey made the experienced officer acquainted with the true character of the vessel in sight; and, replacing the glass with much coolness, he said:

"That fellow shows long arms and ten teeth, besides King George's pennant from his topmast-head. Now, my lads, you are to pull for your lives; for, whatever may be the notions of Master Coffin on the subject of his harpoon, I have no inclination to have my arms pinioned by John Bull, though his majesty himself put on the irons."

The men well understood the manner and meaning of their commander; and, throwing aside their coats, they applied themselves in earnest to their task. For half an hour a profound silence reigned in the boat, which made an amazing progress. But many circumstances conspired to aid the cutter; she had a fine breeze, with smooth water, and a strong tide in her favor; and at the expiration of the time we have mentioned, it was but too apparent that the distance between the pursued and pursuers was lessened nearly half. Barnstable preserved his steady countenance, but there was an expression of care gathering around his dark brow, which indicated that he saw the increasing danger of their situation.

"That fellow has long legs, Master Coffin," he said, in a cheerful tone; "your whale-line must go overboard, and the fifty oar must be handled by your delicate hands."

Tom arose from his seat, and, proceeding forward, he cast the tub and its contents together into the sea, when he seated himself at the bow oar and bent his athletic frame with amazing vigor to the task.

"Ah! there is much of your philosophy in that stroke, Long Tom," cried his commander.—"Keep it up, boys; and if we gain nothing else, we shall at least gain time for deliberation.—Come, Master Coffin, what think you? We have three resources before us; let us hear which is your choice; first, we can turn and fight and be sunk; secondly, we can pull to the land, and endeavor to make good our retreat to the schooner in that manner; and, thirdly, we can head to the shore, and possibly, by running under the guns of that fellow, get the wind of him, and keep the air in our nostrils, after the manner of the whale. D——n the whale! but for the tow the black rascal gave us, we should have been out of sight of this rover!"

"If we fight," said Tom, with quite as much composure as his commander manifested, "we shall be taken or sunk; if we land, sir, I shall be taken, for one man, as I never could make any headway on dry ground, and if we try to get the wind of him by pulling under the cliffs, we shall be cut off by a parcel of lubbers that I can see running along their edges, hoping, I dare say, that they shall be able to get a skulking shot at a boat's crew of honest seafaring men."

"You speak with as much truth as

philosophy, Tom," said Barnstable, who saw his slender hopes of success curtailed by the open appearance of the horse and foot on the cliffs. "These Englishmen have not slept the last night, and I fear Griffith and Manual will fare but badly. That fellow brings a cupful of wind down with him—'tis just his play, and he walks like a race-horse. Ha! he begins to be in earnest!"

While Barnstable was speaking, a column of white smoke was seen issuing from the bows of the cutter; and, as the report of a cannon was wafted to their ears, the shot was seen skipping from wave to wave, tossing the water in spray, and flying to a considerable distance beyond them. The seamen cast cursory glances in the direction of the passing ball, but it produced no manifest effect in either their conduct or appearance. The cockswain, who scanned its range with an eye of more practice than the rest, observed: "That's a lively piece for its metal, and it speaks with a good clear voice; but if they should hear it aboard the *Ariel*, the man who fired it will be sorry it wasn't born dumb."

"You are the prince of philosophers, Master Coffin!" cried Barnstable; "there is some hope in that; let the Englishmen talk away, and, my life on it, the *Ariel* don't believe it is thunder; hand me a musket—I'll draw another shot."

The piece was given to Barnstable, who discharged it several times, as if to taunt their enemies; and the scheme was completely successful. Goaded by the insults, the cutter discharged gun after gun at the little boat, throwing the shot frequently so near as to wet her crew with the spray, but without injuring them in the least. The failure of these attempts of the enemy excited the mirth of the reckless seamen, instead of creating any alarm; and whenever a shot came nearer than common, the cockswain would utter some such expression as:

"A ground swell, a long shot, and a small object makes a clean target;" or, "A man must squint straight to hit a boat."

As, notwithstanding their unsuccessful gunnery, the cutter was constantly gaining on the whale boat, there was a prospect of a speedy termination of the chase, when the report of a cannon was thrown back like an echo from one of the Englishman's discharges, and Barnstable and his companions had the pleasure of seeing the *Ariel* stretching slowly out from the little bay where she had passed the night, with the smoke of the gun of defiance curling above her taper masts.

A loud and simultaneous shout of rapture was given by the lieutenant and all his boat's crew at this cheering sight, while the cutter took in all her light sails, and, as she hauled up on a wind, she fired a whole broadside at the successful fugitives. Many stands of grape, with several round shot, flew by the boat and fell upon the water near them, raising a cloud of foam, but without doing any injury.

"She dies in a flurry," said Tom, casting his eyes at the little vortex into which the boat was then entering.

"If her commander be a true man," cried Barnstable, "he'll not leave us on so short an acquaintance. Give way, my souls! give way! I would see more of this loquacious cruiser."

The temptation for exertion was great, and it was not disregarded by the men; in a few minutes the whale boat reached the schooner, when the crew of the latter received their commander and his companions with shouts and cheers that rang across the waters and reached the ears of the disappointed spectators on the verge of the cliffs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Thus guided on their course they bore,
Until they neared the main-land shore;
When frequent on the hollow blast
Wild shouts of merriment were cast."
—LORD OF THE ISLES.

THE joyful shouts and hearty cheers of the *Ariel's* crew continued for some time after her commander had reached her deck. Barnstable answered the congratulations of his officers by cordial shakes of the hand; and, after waiting for the

ebullition of delight among the seamen to subside a little, he beckoned with an air of authority for silence.

"I thank you, my lads, for your good will," he said, when all were gathered around him in deep attention, "they have given us a tough chase, and, if you had left us another mile to go, we had been lost. That fellow is a king's cutter; and, though his disposition to run to leeward is a good deal mollified, yet he shows signs of fight. At any rate, he is stripping off some of his clothes, which looks as if he were game. Luckily for us, Captain Manual has taken all the marines ashore with him (though what he has done with them, or himself, is a mystery), or we should have had our decks lumbered with live cattle; but, as it is, we have a good working breeze, tolerably smooth water, and a dead match! There is a sort of national obligation on us to whip that fellow; and therefore, without more words about the matter, let us turn to and do it, that we may get our breakfast."

To this specimen of marine eloquence the crew cheered as usual, the young men burning for the combat, and the few old sailors who belonged to the schooner shaking their heads with infinite satisfaction, and swearing by sundry strange oaths that their captain "could talk, when there was need of such thing, like the best dictionary that ever was launched."

During this short harangue, and the subsequent comments, the *Ariel* had been kept under a cloud of canvas as near to the wind as she could lie; and, as this was her best sailing, she had stretched swiftly out from the land to a distance whence the cliffs and the soldiers, who were spread along their summits, were plainly visible. Barnstable turned his glass repeatedly from the cutter to the shore, as different feelings predominated in his breast, before he again spoke.

"If Mr. Griffith is stowed away among those rocks," he at length said, "he shall see as pretty an argument discussed, in as few words, as he ever listened to, provided the gentlemen in yonder cutter have not changed their minds as to the road they intend to journey. What think you, Mr. Merry?"

"I wish with all my heart and soul, sir," returned the fearless boy, "that Mr. Griffith was safe aboard us; it seems the country is alarmed, and God knows what will happen if he is taken! As to the fellow to windward, he'll find it easier to deal with the *Ariel's* boat than with her mother; but he carries a broad sail; I question if he means to show play."

"Never doubt him, boy," said Barnstable; "he is working off the shore, like a man of sense, and, besides, he has his spectacles on, trying to make out what tribe of Yankee Indians we belong to. You'll see him come to the wind presently, and send a few pieces of iron down this way, by way of letting us know where to find him. Much as I like your first lieutenant, Mr. Merry, I would rather leave him on the land this day than see him on my decks. I want no fighting captain to work this boat for me! But tell the drummer, sir, to beat to quarters."

The boy, who was staggering under the weight of his melodious instrument, had been expecting this command, and, without waiting for the midshipman to communicate the order, he commenced that short rub-a-dub air that will at any time rouse a thousand men from the deepest sleep, and cause them to fly to their means of offense with a common soul. The crew of the *Ariel* had been collected in groups studying the appearance of the enemy, cracking their jokes, and waiting only for this usual order to repair to the guns; and, at the first tap of the drum, they spread with steadiness to the different parts of the little vessel, where their various duties called them. The cannon were surrounded by small parties of vigorous and athletic young men; the few marines were drawn up in array with muskets; the officers appeared in their boarding-caps, with pistols stuck in their belts, and naked sabers in their hands. Barnstable paced his little quarter-deck with a firm tread, dangling a speaking-trumpet by its lanyard on his forefinger, or occasionally applying the glass to his eye, which, when not in use, was placed

under one arm, while his sword was resting against the foot of the mainmast; a pair of heavy ship's pistols were thrust into his belt also; and piles of muskets, boarding-pikes, and naked sabers, were placed on different parts of the deck. The laugh of the seamen was heard no longer; and those who spoke uttered their thoughts only in low and indistinct whispers.

The English cutter held her way from the land, until she got an offing of more than two miles, when she reduced her sails to a yet smaller number; and, heaving into the wind, she fired a gun in a direction opposite to that which pointed to the *Ariel*.

"Now I would wager a quintal of codfish, Master Coffin," said Barnstable, "against the best cask of porter that was ever brewed in England, that fellow believes a Yankee schooner can fly in the wind's eye! If he wishes to speak to us, why don't he give his cutter a little sheet and come down?"

The cockswain had made his arrangements for the combat with much more method and philosophy than any other man in the vessel. When the drum beat to quarters he threw aside his jacket, vest, and shirt, with as little hesitation as if he stood under an American sun, and with all the discretion of a man who had engaged in an undertaking that required the free use of his utmost powers. As he was known to be a privileged individual in the *Ariel*, and one whose opinions, in all matters of seamanship, were regarded as oracles by the crew, and were listened to by his commander with no little demonstration of respect, the question excited no surprise. He was standing at the breech of his long gun with his brawny arms folded on a breast that had been turned to the color of blood by long exposure, his grizzled locks fluttering in the breeze, and his tall form towering far above the heads of all near him.

"He hugs the wind, sir, as if it was his sweetheart," was his answer; "but he'll let go his hold soon; and, if he don't, we can find a way to make him fall to leeward."

"Keep a good full!" cried the commander in a stern voice; "and let the vessel go through the water.—That fellow walks well, Long Tom; but we are too much for him on a bowling; though, if he continue to draw ahead in this manner, it will be night before we can get alongside him."

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the cockswain; "them cutters carries a press of canvas when they seem to have but little; their gaffs are all the same as young booms, and spread a broad head to their mainsails. But it's no hard matter to knock a few cloths out of their bolt-ropes, when she will both drop astern and to leeward."

"I believe there is good sense in your scheme this time," said Barnstable; "for I am anxious about the frigate's people—though I hate a noisy chase. Speak to him, Tom, and let us see if he will answer."

"Ay, ay, sir," cried the cockswain, sinking his body in such a manner as to let his head fall to a level with the cannon that he controlled, when, after divers orders, and sundry movements to govern the direction of the piece, he applied a match, with a rapid motion, to the priming. An immense body of white smoke rushed from the muzzle of the cannon, followed by a sheet of vivid fire, until, losing its power, it yielded to the wind, and, as it rose from the water, spread like a cloud, and, passing through the masts of the schooner, was driven far to leeward, and soon blended in the mists which were swiftly scudding before the fresh breezes of the ocean.

Although many curious eyes were watching this beautiful sight from the cliffs, there was too little of novelty in the exhibition to attract a single look of the crew of the schooner from the more important examination of the effect of the shot on their enemy. Barnstable sprang lightly on a gun, and watched the instant when the ball would strike, with keen interest, while Long Tom threw himself aside from the line of the smoke with similar intention; holding one of his long arms extended toward his name-sake, with a finger on the vent, and supporting his frame by placing the hand of the other on

the deck, as his eyes glanced through an opposite port-hole, in an attitude that most men might have despaired of imitating with success.

"There go the chips!" cried Barnstable. "Bravo! Master Coffin, you never planted iron in the ribs of an Englishmen with more judgment. Let him have another piece of it; and, if he like the sport, we'll play a game of long bowls with him!"

"Ay, ay, sir," returned the cockswain, who, the instant he witnessed the effects of his shot, had returned to superintend the reloading of his gun; "if he holds on half an hour longer, I'll dub him down to our own size, when we can close and make an even fight of it."

The drum of the Englishman was now, for the first time, heard rattling across the waters, and echoing the call to quarters, that had already proceeded from the *Ariel*.

"Ah! you have sent him to his guns!" said Barnstable; "we shall now hear more of it; wake him up, Tom—wake him up."

"We shall start him on end, or put him to sleep altogether, shortly," said the deliberate cockswain, who never allowed himself to be at all hurried, even by his commander. "My shot are pretty much like a shoal of porpoises, and commonly sail in each other's wake. Stand by—heave her breech forward—so; get out of that, you damned young reprobate, and let my harpoon alone!"

"What are you at there, Master Coffin?" cried Barnstable; "are you tongue-tied?"

"Here's one of the boys skylarking with my harpoon in the lee-scuppers, and by-and-by when I shall want it most there'll be a no-man's land to hunt for it in."

"Never mind the boy, Tom; send him aft here to me, and I'll polish his behavior; give the Englishman some more iron."

"I want the little villain to pass up my cartridges," returned the angry old seaman; "but if you'll be so good, sir, as to hit him a crack or two, now and then, as he goes by you to the magazine, the monkey will learn his manners, and the schooner's work will be all the better done for it.—A young herring-faced monkey! to meddle with a tool ye don't know the use of. If your parents had spent more of their money on your edication and less on your outfit, you'd ha' been a gentleman to what ye are now."

"Hurrah! Tom, hurrah!" cried Barnstable, a little impatiently; "is your namesake never to open his throat again?"

"Ay, ay, sir; all ready," grumbled the cockswain; "depress a little; so—so; a damned young baboon-behaved curmudgeon; overhaul that forward fall more; stand by with your match—but I'll pay him!—fire!" This was the actual commencement of the fight; for as the shot of Tom Coffin traveled, as he had intimated, very much in the same direction, their enemy found the sport becoming too hot to be endured in silence, and the report of the second gun from the *Ariel* was instantly followed by that of the whole broadside of the *Alacrity*. The shot of the cutter flew in a very good direction, but her guns were too light to give them efficiency at that distance, and as one or two were heard to strike against the bend of the schooner, and fall back innocuously, into the water, the cockswain, whose good humor became gradually restored as the combat thickened, remarked with his customary apathy:

"Them count for no more than love-taps—does the Englishman think that we are firing salutes?"

"Stir him up, Tom! every blow you give him will help to open his eyes," cried Barnstable, rubbing his hands with glee, as he witnessed the success of his efforts to close.

Thus far the cockswain and his crew had the fight, on the part of the *Ariel*, altogether to themselves, the men who were stationed at the smaller and shorter guns standing in perfect idleness by their sides; but in ten or fifteen minutes the commander of the *Alacrity*, who had been staggered by the weight of the shot that had struck him, found that it was no longer in his power to retreat, if he wished it; when he decided on the only course that was

left for a brave man to pursue, and steered boldly in such a direction as would soonest bring him in contact with his enemy without exposing his vessel to be raked by his fire. Barnstable watched each movement of his foe with eagle eyes, and when the vessel had got within a lessened distance, he gave the order for a general fire to be opened. The action now grew warm and spirited on both sides. The power of the wind was counteracted by the constant explosion of the cannon; and, instead of driving rapidly to leeward, a white canopy of curling smoke hung above the *Ariel*, or rested on the water, lingering in her wake, so as to mark the path by which she was approaching to a closer and still deadlier struggle. The shouts of the young sailors as they handled their instruments of death became more animated and fierce, while the cockswain pursued his occupation with the silence and skill of one who labored in a regular vocation. Barnstable was unusually composed and quiet, maintaining the grave deportment of a commander on whom rested the fortunes of the contest, at the same time that his dark eyes were dancing with the fire of suppressed animation.

"Give it them!" he occasionally cried, in a voice that might be heard amid the bellowing of the cannon; "never mind their cordage, my lads; drive home their bolts, and make your marks below their ridge-ropes."

In the meantime the Englishman played a manful game.

He had suffered a heavy loss by the distant cannonade, which no metal he possessed could retort upon his enemy; but he struggled nobly to repair the error in judgment with which he had begun the contest. The two vessels gradually drew nigher to each other, until they both entered into the common cloud created by their fire, which thickened and spread around them in such a manner as to conceal their dark hulls from the gaze of the curious and interested spectators on the cliffs. The heavy reports of the cannon were now mingled with the rattling of muskets and pistols, and streaks of fire might be seen glancing like flashes of lightning through the white cloud which enshrouded the combatants; and many minutes of painful uncertainty followed, before the deeply-interested soldiers, who were gazing at the scene, discovered on whose banners victory had alighted.

We shall follow the combatants into their misty wreath, and display to the reader the events as they occurred.

The fire of the *Ariel* was much the most quick and deadly, both because she had suffered less, and her men were less exhausted; and the cutter stood desperately on to decide the combat, after grappling hand to hand. Barnstable anticipated her intention, and well understood her commander's reason for adopting this course; but he was not a man to calculate coolly his advantages, when pride and daring invited him to a more severe trial. Accordingly, he met the enemy half-way, and, as the vessels rushed together, the stern of the schooner was secured to the bows of the cutter, by the joint efforts of both parties. The voice of the English commander was now plainly to be heard, in the uproar, calling to his men to follow him.

"Away there, boarders! repel boarders on the starboard quarter!" shouted Barnstable through his trumpet.

This was the last order that the gallant young sailor gave with his instrument; for, as he spoke, he cast it from him, and seizing his saber, flew to the spot where the enemy was about to make his most desperate effort. The shouts, execrations, and tauntings of the combatants now succeeded to the roar of the cannon, which could be used no longer with effect, though the fight was still maintained with spirited discharges of the small-arms.

"Sweep him from his decks!" cried the English commander, as he appeared on his own bulwarks, surrounded by a dozen of his bravest men, "drive the rebellious dogs into the sea!"

"Away there, marines!" retorted Barnstable, firing his pistol at the advancing enemy, "leave not a man of them to sup his grog again."

The tremendous and close volley that succeeded this order nearly accomplished

the command of Barnstable to the letter, and the commander of the *Alacrity*, perceiving that he stood alone, reluctantly fell back on the deck of his own vessel, in order to bring on his men once more.

"Board her! graybeards and boys, idlers and all!" shouted Barnstable, springing in advance of his crew—a powerful arm arrested the movement of the dauntless seaman, and before he had time to recover himself, he was drawn violently back to his own vessel by the irresistible grasp of his cockswain.

"The fellow's in his flurry," said Tom, "and it wouldn't be wise to go within reach of his flukes; but I'll just step ahead and give him a set with my harpoon."

Without waiting for a reply, the cockswain reared his tall frame on the bulwarks, and was in the act of stepping on board of his enemy, when a sea separated the vessels, and he fell with a heavy dash of the waters into the ocean. As twenty muskets and pistols were discharged at the instant he appeared, the crew of the *Ariel* supposed his fall to be occasioned by his wounds, and were rendered doubly fierce by the sight, and the cry of their commander to——

"Revenge Long Tom! board her! Long Tom or death!"

They threw themselves forward in irresistible numbers, and forced a passage, with much bloodshed, to the forecastle of the *Alacrity*. The Englishman was overpowered, but still remained undaunted—he rallied his crew, and bore up most gallantly to the fray. Thrusts of pikes and blows of sabers were becoming close and deadly, while muskets and pistols were constantly discharged by those who were kept at a distance by the pressure of the throng of closer combatants.

Barnstable led his men in advance, and became a mark of peculiar vengeance to his enemies, as they slowly yielded before his vigorous assaults. Chance had placed the two commanders on opposite sides of the cutter's deck, and the victory seemed to incline toward either party, wherever these daring officers directed the struggle in person. But the Englishman, perceiving that the ground he maintained in person was lost elsewhere, made an effort to restore the battle by changing his position, followed by one or two of his best men. A marine who preceded him leveled his musket within a few feet of the American commander, and was about to fire, when Merry glided among the combatants and passed his dirk into the body of the man, who fell at the blow; shaking his piece with horrid imprecations, the wounded soldier prepared to deal his vengeance on his youthful assailant, when the fearless boy leaped within its muzzle and buried his own keen weapon in his heart.

"Hurrah!" shouted the unconscious Barnstable, from the edge of the quarterdeck, where, attended by a few men, he was driving all before him. "Revenge!—Long Tom and victory!"

"We have them!" exclaimed the Englishman; "handle your pikes! we have them between two fires."

The battle would probably have terminated very differently from what previous circumstances had indicated, had not a wild-looking figure appeared in the cutter's channels at that moment, issuing from the sea, and gaining the deck at the same instant. It was Long Tom, with his iron visage rendered fierce by his previous discomfiture, and his grizzled locks drenched with the briny element from which he had risen, looking like Neptune with his trident. Without speaking, he poised his harpoon, and, with a powerful effort, pinned the unfortunate Englishman to the mast of his own vessel.

"Starn all!" cried Tom, by a sort of instinct, when the blow was struck; and, catching up the musket of the fallen marine, he dealt out terrible and fatal blows with its butt on all who approached him, utterly disregarding the use of the bayonet on its muzzle. The unfortunate commander of the *Alacrity* brandished his sword with frantic gestures, while his eyes rolled in horrid wildness, when he writhed for an instant in his passing agonies, and then, as his head dropped lifeless upon his gored breast, he hung against the spar, a spectacle of dismay to his crew. A few of the Englishmen stood chained to the spot in silent horror at the

sight, but most of them fled to their lower deck, or hastened to conceal themselves in the secret parts of the vessel, leaving to the Americans the undisputed possession of the *Alacrity*.

Two-thirds of the cutter's crew suffered either in life or limbs by this short struggle; nor was the victory obtained by Barnstable without paying the price of several valuable lives. The first burst of conquest was not, however, the moment to appreciate the sacrifice, and loud and reiterated shouts proclaimed the exultation of the conquerors. As the flush of victory subsided, however, recollection returned, and Barnstable issued such orders as humanity and his duty rendered necessary. While the vessels were separating, and the bodies of the dead and wounded were removing, the conqueror paced the deck of his prize, as if lost in deep reflection. He passed his hand frequently across his blackened and blood-stained brow, while his eyes would rise to examine the vast canopy of smoke that was hovering above the vessels like a dense fog exhaling from the ocean. The result of his deliberations was soon announced to the crew.

"Haul down all your flags," he cried; "set the Englishman's colors again, and show the enemy's jack above our ensign in the *Ariel*."

The appearance of the whole channel-fleet within half gun-shot would not have occasioned more astonishment among the victors than this extraordinary mandate. The wondering seamen suspended their several employments to gaze at the singular change that was making in the flags, those symbols that were viewed with a sort of reverence; but none presumed to comment openly on the procedure except Long Tom, who stood on the quarter-deck of the prize, straightening the pliable iron of the harpoon, which he had recovered with as much care and diligence as if it were necessary to the maintenance of their conquest. Like the others, however, he suspended his employment when he heard this order, and manifested no reluctance to express his dissatisfaction at the measure.

"If the Englishmen grumble at the fight, and think it not fair play," muttered the cockswain, "let us try it over again, sir; as they are somewhat short of hands they can send a boat to the land and get off a gang of them lazy riptyles, the soldiers, who stand looking at us like so many red lizards crawling on a beach, and we'll give them another chance; but damme, if I see the use of whipping them, if this is to be the better end of the matter."

"What's that you're grumbling there, like a dead north-easter, you horse-mackerel?" said Barnstable; "where are our friends and countrymen who are on land? are we to leave them to swing on gibbets or rot in dungeons?"

The cockswain listened with great earnestness, and, when his commander had spoken, he struck the palm of his broad hand against his brawny thigh, with a report like a pistol, and answered:

"I see how it is, sir; you reckon the red-coats have Mr. Griffith in tow. Just run the schooner into shoal water, Captain Barnstable, and drop an anchor where we can get the long gun to bear on them, and give me the whale-boat with five or six men to back me—they must have long legs if they get an offing before I run them aboard!"

"Fool! do you think a boat's crew could contend with fifty armed soldiers?"

"Soldiers!" echoed Tom, whose spirits had been strongly excited by the conflict, snapping his fingers with ineffable disdain; "that for all the soldiers that were ever rigged; one whale could kill a thousand of them; and here stands the man that has killed his round hundred of whales!"

"Pshaw! you grampus, do you turn braggart in your old age?"

"It's no bragging, sir, to speak a log-book truth; but if Captain Barnstable thinks that old Tom Coffin carries a speaking-trumpet for a figure-head, let him pass the word forrard to man the boats."

"No, no, my old master at the marlin-spike," said Barnstable, kindly; "I know thee too well, thou brother of Neptune!

but shall we not throw the bread-room dust in those Englishmen's eyes by wearing their bunting a while, till something may offer to help our captured countrymen?"

The cockswain shook his head and cogitated a moment, as if struck with sundry new ideas, when he answered:

"Ay, ay, sir; that's blue-water philosophy—as deep as the sea. Let the riptyles clew up the corners of their mouths to their eyebrows now; when they come to hear the raal Yankee truth of the matter, they will sheet them down to their leather neckcloths!"

With this reflection the cockswain was much consoled, and the business of repairing damages and securing the prize proceeded without further interruption on his part. The few prisoners who were unhurt were rapidly transferred to the *Ariel*. While Barnstable was attending to this duty, an unusual bustle drew his eyes to one of the hatchways, where he beheld a couple of his marines dragging forward a gentleman, whose demeanor and appearance indicated the most abject terror. After examining the extraordinary appearance of this individual for a moment, in silent amazement, the lieutenant exclaimed:

"Who have we here? some amateur in fights! an inquisitive wonder-seeking noncombatant, who has volunteered to serve his king, and perhaps draw a picture or write a book to serve himself! Pray, sir, in what capacity did you serve in this vessel?"

The captive ventured a sidelong glance at his interrogator, in whom he expected to encounter Griffith, but, perceiving that it was a face he did not know, he felt a revival of confidence that enabled him to reply:

"I came by accident; being on board the cutter at the time her late commander determined to engage you. It was not in his power to land me, as I trust you will not hesitate to do; your conjecture of my being a non-combatant——"

"Is perfectly true," interrupted Barnstable; "it requires no spy-glass to read that name written on you from stem to stern; but for certain weighty reasons——"

He paused to turn at a signal given him by young Merry, who whispered eagerly in his ear:

"'Tis Mr. Dillon, kinsman of Colonel Howard; I've seen him often, sailing in the wake of my cousin Cicely."

"Dillon!" exclaimed Barnstable, rubbing his hands with pleasure; "what, Kit of that name! he with 'the Savannah face, eyes of black, and skin of the same color?' He's grown a little whiter with fear; but he's a prize, at this moment, worth twenty *Alacrities!*"

These exclamations were made in a low voice, and at some little distance from the prisoner, whom he now approached and addressed.

"Policy, and consequently duty, require that I should detain you for a short time, sir; but you shall have a sailor's welcome to whatever we possess, to lessen the weight of captivity."

Barnstable precluded any reply, by bowing to his captive, and turning away to superintend the management of his vessels. In a short time it was announced that they were ready to make sail, when the *Ariel* and her prize were brought close to the wind, and commenced beating slowly along the land, as if intending to return to the bay whence the latter had sailed that morning. As they stretched in to the shore on the first tack, the soldiers on the cliffs rent the air with their shouts and acclamations, to which Barnstable, pointing to the assumed symbols that were fluttering in the breeze from his masts, directed his crew to respond in the most cordial manner. As the distance, and the want of boats, prevented any further communication, the soldiers, after gazing at the receding vessels for a time, disappeared from the cliffs, and were soon lost from the sight of the adventurous mariners. Hour after hour was consumed in the tedious navigation, against an adverse tide, and the short day was drawing to a close, before they approached the mouth of their destined haven. While making one of their numerous stretches, to and from the land, the cutter, in which Barnstable

continued, passed the victim of their morning's sport, riding on the water, the waves curling over his huge carcass, as on some rounded rock, and already surrounded by the sharks, who were preying on his defenseless body.

"See! Master Coffin," cried the lieutenant, pointing out the object to his cockswain as they glided by it, "the shovel-nosed gentlemen are regaling daintily; you have neglected the Christian's duty of burying your dead."

The old seaman cast a melancholy look at the dead whale, and replied:

"If I had the creature in Boston Bay, or on the Sandy Point of Munny Moy, 'twould be the making of me! But riches and honor are for the great and l'arned, and there's nothing left for poor Tom Coffin to do, but to veer and haul on his own rolling tackle, that he may ride out the rest of the gale of life without springing any of his old spars."

"How now, Long Tom!" cried the officer; "these rocks and cliffs will shipwreck you on the shoals of poetry yet; you grow sentimental!"

"Them rocks might wrack any vessel that struck them," said the literal cockswain; "and as for poetry, I wants none better than the good old song of Captain Kidd; but it's enough to raise solemn thoughts in a Cape Poge Indian, to see an eighty-barrel whale devoured by sharks—'tis an awful waste of property! I've seen the death of two hundred of the creaters, though it seems to keep the rations of poor old Tom as short as ever."

The cockswain walked aft, while the vessel was passing the whale, and seating himself on the taffrail, with his face resting gloomily on his bony hand, he fastened his eyes on the object of his solicitude, and continued to gaze at it with melancholy regret, while it was to be seen glistening in the sunbeams, as it rolled its glittering side of white into the air, or the rays fell unreflected on the black and rougher coat of the back of the monster. In the meantime, the navigators diligently pursued their way for the haven we have mentioned, into which they steered with every appearance of the fearlessness of friends, and the exultation of conquerors.

A few eager and gratified spectators lined the edges of the small bay, and Barnstable concluded his arrangement for deceiving the enemy, by admonishing his crew that they were now about to enter on a service that would require their utmost intrepidity and sagacity.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Our trumpet called you to this gentle parle."
—KING JOHN.

As Griffith and his companions rushed from the offices of St. Ruth into the open air they encountered no one to intercept their flight, or communicate the alarm. Warned by the experience of the earlier part of the same night they avoided the points where they knew the sentinels were posted, though fully prepared to bear down all resistance, and were soon beyond the probability of immediate detection. They proceeded for the distance of half a mile with rapid strides, and, with the stern and sullen silence of men who expected to encounter immediate danger, resolved to breast it with desperate resolution; but, as they plunged into a copse that clustered around the ruin which has been already mentioned, they lessened their exertions to a more deliberate pace, and a short but guarded dialogue ensued.

"We have had a timely escape," said Griffith; "I would much rather have endured captivity than have been the cause of introducing confusion and bloodshead into the peaceful residence of Colonel Howard."

"I would, sir, that you had been of this opinion some hours earlier," returned the pilot, with a severity in his tones that even conveyed more meaning than his words.

"I may have forgotten my duty, sir, in my anxiety to inquire into the condition of a family in whom I feel a particular interest," returned Griffith, in a manner in which pride evidently struggled with respect; "but this is not a time for regrets; I apprehend that we follow you on an er-

rand of some moment, where actions would be more acceptable than any words of apology. What is your pleasure now?"

"I much fear that our project will be defeated," said the pilot, gloomily; "the alarm will spread with the morning fogs, and there will be mustering of the yeomen, and consultations of the gentry, that will drive all thoughts of amusement from their minds. The rumor of the descent will, at any time, force sleep from the shores of this island to at least ten leagues inland."

"Ay, you have probably passed some pleasant nights with your eyes open, among them yourself, Master Pilot," said Manual; "they may thank the Frenchman Thurot, in the old business of '56, and our own dare-devil, the bloody Scotchman, as the causes of their quarters being so often beaten up. After all, Thurot, with his fleet, did no more than bully them a little, and the poor fellow was finally extinguished by a few small cruisers, like a drummer's boy under a grenadier's cap; but honest Paul sang a different tune for his countrymen to dance to, and——"

"I believe you will shortly dance yourself, Manual," interrupted Griffith, quickly, "and in very pleasure that you have escaped an English prison."

"Say, rather, an English gibbet," continued the elated marine; "for had a court-martial or a court-civil discussed the manner of our entrance into this island, I doubt whether we should have fared better than the dare-devil himself, honest——"

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the impatient Griffith; "enough of this nonsense, Captain Manual; we have other matters to discuss now. What course have you determined to pursue, Mr. Gray?"

The pilot started, like a man roused from a deep musing, at this question, and, after a pause of a moment, he spoke in a low tone of voice, as if still under the influence of deep and melancholy feeling:

"The night has already run into the morning watch, but the sun is backward to show himself in this latitude in the heart of winter. I must depart, my friends, to rejoin you some ten hours hence; it will be necessary to look deeper into our scheme before we hazard anything, and no one can do the service but myself. Where shall we meet again?"

"I have reason to think that there is an unfrequented ruin at no great distance from us," said Griffith; "perhaps we might find both shelter and privacy among its deserted walls."

"The thought is good," returned the pilot, "and 'twill answer a double purpose. Could you find the place where you put the marines in ambush, Captain Manual?"

"Has a dog a nose, and can he follow a clean scent?" exclaimed the marine; "do you think, Signor Pilota, that a general ever puts his forces into an ambuscade where he can't find them himself? 'Fore God! I knew well enough where the rascals lay snoring on their knapsacks, some half an hour ago, and I would have given the oldest majority in Washington's army to have had them where a small intimation from myself could have brought them in line ready dressed for a charge. I know not how you fared, gentlemen, but with me the sight of twenty such vagabonds would have been a joyous spectacle; we would have tossed that Captain Borroughcliffe and his recruits on the point of our bayonets as the devil would pitch——"

"Come, come, Manual," said Griffith, a little angrily, "you constantly forget our situation and our errand; can you lead your men hither without discovery before the day dawns?"

"I want but the shortest half hour that a bad watch ever traveled over to do it in."

"Then follow, and I will appoint a place of secret rendezvous," rejoined Griffith; "Mr. Gray can learn our situation at the same time."

The pilot was seen to beckon, through the gloom of the night, for his companions to move forward; when they proceeded, with cautious steps, in quest of the desired shelter. A short search brought them in contact with a part of the ruinous walls, which spread over a large surface, and

which in places reared their black fragments against the sky, casting a deeper obscurity across the secret recesses of the wood.

"This will do," said Griffith, when they had skirted for some distance the outline of the crumbling fabric; "bring up your men to this point, where I will meet you, and conduct them to some more secret place, for which I shall search during your absence."

"A perfect paradise, after the cabletiers of the *Ariel!*" exclaimed Manual; "I doubt not but a good spot might be selected among these trees for a steady drill—a thing my soul has pined after for six long months."

"Away, away!" cried Griffith; "here is no place for idle parades; if we find shelter from discovery and capture until you shall be needed in a deadly struggle, 'twill be well."

Manual was slowly retracing his steps to the skirts of the wood, when he suddenly turned and asked:

"Shall I post a small picket, a mere corporal's guard, in the open ground in front, and make a chain of sentinels to our works?"

"We have no works—we want no sentinels," returned his impatient commander: "our security is only to be found in secrecy. Lead up your men under the cover of the trees, and let those three bright stars be your landmarks—bring them in a range with the northern corner of the wood——"

"Enough, Mr. Griffith," interrupted Manual; "a column of troops is not to be steered like a ship, by compass, and bearings and distances—trust me, sir, the march shall be conducted with proper discretion, though in a military manner."

Any reply or expostulation was prevented by the sudden disappearance of the marine, whose retreating footsteps were heard for several moments, as he moved at a deliberate pace through the underwood. During this short interval the pilot stood reclining against the corner of the ruins in profound silence; but when the sounds of Manual's march were no longer audible, he advanced from under the deeper shadows of the wall, and approached his youthful companion.

"We are indebted to the marine for our escape," he said; "I hope we are not to suffer by his folly."

"He is what Barnstable calls a rectangular man," returned Griffith, "and will have his way in matters of his profession, though a daring companion in a hazardous expedition. If we can keep him from exposing us by his silly parade, we shall find him a man who will do his work like a soldier, sir, when need happens."

"'Tis all I ask; until the last moment, he and his command must be torpid; for if we are discovered, any attempt of ours, with some twenty bayonets and a half-pike or two, would be useless against the force that would be brought to crush us."

"The truth of your opinion is too obvious," returned Griffith; "those fellows will sleep a week at a time in a gale at sea, but the smell of the land wakes them up, and I fear 'twill be hard to keep them close during the day."

"It must be done, sir, by the strong hand of force," said the pilot sternly, "if it cannot be done by admonition; if we had no more than the recruits of that drunken martinet to cope with, it would be no hard task to drive them into the sea; but I learned in my prison that horse are expected on the shore with the dawn; there is one they call Dillon who is on the alert to do us mischief."

"The miscreant!" muttered Griffith. "Then you also have had communication, sir, with some of the inmates of St. Ruth?"

"It behooves a man who is embarked in a perilous enterprise to seize all opportunities to learn his hazard," said the pilot, evasively; "if the report be true, I fear we have but little hopes of succeeding in our plans."

"Nay, then, let us take the advantage of the darkness to regain the schooner; the coasts of England swarm with hostile cruisers, and a rich trade is flowing into the bosom of this island from the four quarters of the world; we shall not seek long for a foe worthy to contend with, nor for the opportunities to cut up the Englishman in his sinews of war—his wealth."

"Griffith," returned the pilot, in his still, low tones, that seemed to belong to a man who never knew ambition, nor felt human passion, "I grow sick of this struggle between merit and privileged rank. It is in vain that I scour the waters which the King of England boastingly calls his own, and capture his vessels in the very mouths of his harbors, if my reward is to consist only of violated promises, and hollow professions: but your proposition is useless to me; I have at length obtained a ship of a size sufficient to convey my person to the shores of honest, plain-dealing America; and I would enter the hall of Congress, on my return, attended by a few of the legislators of this learned isle, who think they possess the exclusive privilege to be wise, and virtuous, and great."

"Such a retinue might doubtless be grateful both to your own feelings and those who would receive you," said Griffith, modestly; "but would it affect the great purposes of our struggle? or is it an exploit, when achieved, worth the hazard you incur?"

Griffith felt the hand of the pilot on his own, pressing it with convulsive grasp, as he replied, in a voice, if possible, even more desperately calm than his former tones:

"There is glory in it, young man; if it be purchased with danger, it shall be rewarded by fame! It is true, I wear your republican livery, and call the Americans my brothers; but it is because you combat in behalf of human nature. Were your cause less holy, I would not shed the meanest drop that flows in English veins, to serve it; but now it hallows every exploit that is undertaken in its favor, and the names of all who contend for it shall belong to posterity. Is there no merit in teaching these proud islanders that the arm of liberty can pluck them from the very empire of their corruption and oppression?"

"Then let me go and ascertain what we most wish to know; you have been seen there, and might attract——"

"You little know me," interrupted the pilot: "the deed is my own. If I succeed I shall claim the honor, and it is proper that I incur the hazard; if I fail, it will be buried in oblivion, like fifty others of my schemes, which, had I power to back me, would have thrown this kingdom in consternation, from the lookouts on the boldest of its headlands to those on the turrets of Windsor Castle. But I was born without the nobility of twenty generations to corrupt my blood and deaden my soul, and am not trusted by the degenerate wretches who rule the French marine."

"'Tis said that ships of two decks are building from our own oak," said Griffith; "and you have only to present yourself in America, to be employed most honorably."

"Ay! the republics cannot doubt the man who has supported their flag, without lowering it an inch, in so many bloody conflicts! I do go there, Griffith, but my way lies on this path: my pretended friends have bound my hands often, but my enemies, never—neither shall they now. Ten hours will determine all I wish to know, and with you I trust the safety of the party till my return: be vigilant, but be prudent."

"If you should not appear at the appointed hour," exclaimed Griffith, as he beheld the pilot turning to depart, "where am I to seek, and how serve you?"

"Seek me not, but return to your vessel; my earliest years were passed on this coast, and I can leave the island should it be necessary, as I entered it, aided by this disguise and my own knowledge; in such an event, look to your charge, and forget me entirely."

Griffith could distinguish the silent wave of his hand when the pilot concluded, and the next instant he was left alone. For several minutes the young man continued where he had been standing, musing on the singular endowments and restless enterprise of the being with whom chance had thus unexpectedly brought him in contact, and with whose fate and fortune his own prospects had, by the intervention of unlooked-for circumstances, become intimately connected. When the reflections excited by recent occurrences had passed away, he entered within the sweeping circle of the ruinous walls, and, after a very cursory survey of the state of the dilapidated building, he was satisfied that

it contained enough secret places to conceal his men, until the return of the pilot should warn them that the hour had come when they must attempt the seizure of the devoted sportsmen, or darkness should again facilitate their return to the *Ariel*. It was now about the commencement of that period of deep night which seamen distinguish as the morning watch, and Griffith ventured to the edge of the little wood, to listen if any sounds or tumult indicated that they were pursued. On reaching a point where his eye could faintly distinguish objects, the young man paused, and bestowed a close and wary investigation on the surrounding scene.

The fury of the gale had sensibly abated, but a steady current of sea-air was rushing through the naked branches of the oaks, lending a dreary and mournful sound to the gloom of the dim prospect. At the distance of a short half-mile, the confused outline of the pile of St. Ruth rose proudly against the streak of light which was gradually increasing above the ocean, and there were moments when the young seaman even fancied he could discern the bright caps that topped the waves of his own disturbed element. The long, dull roar of the surf, as it tumbled heavily on the beach, or dashed with unbroken violence against the hard boundary of rocks, was borne along by the blasts distinctly to his ears. It was a time and a situation to cause the young seaman to ponder deeply on the changes and chances of his hazardous profession. Only a few short hours had passed since he was striving with his utmost skill, and with all his collected energy, to guide the enormous fabric, in which so many of his comrades were now quietly sleeping on the broad ocean, from that very shore on which he now stood in cool indifference to the danger. The recollection of home, America, his youthful and enduring passion, and the character and charms of his mistress, blended in a sort of wild and feverish confusion, which was not, however, without its pleasures, in the ardent fancy of the young man; and he was slowly approaching, step by step, toward the Abbey, when the sound of footsteps, proceeding evidently from the measured tread of disciplined men, reached his ears. He was instantly recalled to his recollection by this noise, which increased as the party deliberately approached; and in a few moments he was able to distinguish a line of men marching in order toward the edge of the wood, from which he had so recently issued. Retiring rapidly under the deeper shadow of the trees, he waited until it was apparent the party intended to enter under its cover also, when he ventured to speak.

"Who comes? and what errand?" he cried.

"A skulker, and to burrow like a rabbit, or jump from hole to hole like a wharf-rat!" said Manual, sulkily; "here have I been marching within half musket-shot of the enemy, without daring to pull a trigger even on their outposts, because our muzzles are plugged with that universal extinguisher of gunpowder, called prudence. 'Fore God! Mr. Griffith, I hope you may never feel the temptation to do an evil deed which I felt just now, to throw a volley of small shot into that dog-kennel of a place, if it were only to break its windows and let in the night air upon the sleeping sot who is dozing away the fumes of some as good, old, south-side —hark ye, Mr. Griffith, one word in your ear."

A short conference took place between the two officers, apart from the men, at the close of which, as they rejoined the party, Manual might be heard urging his plans on the reluctant ears of Griffith in the following words:

"I could carry the old dungeon without waking one of the snorers; and consider, sir, we might get a stock of as rich cordial from its cellars as ever oiled the throat of a gentleman!"

"'Tis idle, 'tis idle," said Griffith impatiently; "we are not robbers of hen-roosts, nor wine-gaugers, to be prying into the vaults of the English gentry, Captain Manual; but honorable men, employed in the sacred cause of liberty and our country. Lead your party into the ruin, and let them seek their rest; we may have work for them with the dawn."

"Evil was the hour when I quitted the line of the army, to place a soldier under the orders of an awkward squad of tarry jackets!" muttered Manual, as he proceeded to execute an order that was delivered with an air of authority that he knew must be obeyed. "As pretty an opportunity for a surprise and a forage thrown away as ever crossed the path of a partisan! but, by all the rights of man! I'll have an encampment in some order.—Here, you sergeant, detail a corporal and three men for a picket, and station them in the skirts of this wood. We shall have a sentinel in advance of our position, and things shall be conducted with some air of discipline."

Griffith heard this order with great inward disgust; but, as he anticipated the return of the pilot before the light could arrive to render this weak exposure of their situation apparent, he forbore exercising his power to alter the arrangement. Manual had, therefore, the satisfaction of seeing his little party quartered, as he thought, in a military manner, before he retired with Griffith and his men into one of the vaulted apartments of the ruin, which, by its open and broken doors, invited their entrance. Here the marines disposed themselves to rest, while the two officers succeeded in passing the tedious hours, without losing their characters for watchfulness by conversing with each other, or, at whiles, suffering their thoughts to roam in the very different fields which fancy would exhibit to men of such different characters. In this manner, hour after hour passed, in listless quiet, or sullen expectation, until the day had gradually advanced, and it became dangerous to keep the sentinels and picket in a situation where they were liable to be seen by any straggler who might be passing near the wood. Manual remonstrated against any alteration, as being entirely unmilitary, for he was apt to carry his notions of tactics to extremes whenever he came into collision with a sea officer; but in this instance his superior was firm, and the only concession the captain could obtain was the permission to place a solitary sentinel within a few feet of the vault, though under the cover of the crumbling walls of the building itself. With this slight deviation in their arrangements, the uneasy party remained for several hours longer, impatiently awaiting the period when they should be required to move.

The guns first fired from the *Alacrity* had been distinctly audible, and were pronounced by Griffith, whose practiced ear detected the metal of the piece that was used, as not proceeding from the schooner. When the rapid though distant rumbling of the spirited cannonade became audible, it was with difficulty that Griffith could restrain either his own feelings or the conduct of his companions within those bounds that prudence and their situation required. The last gun was, however, fired, and not a man had left the vault, and conjectures as to the result of the fight succeeded to those which had been made on the character of the combatants during the action. Some of the marines would raise their heads from the fragments which served them as pillows on which they were seeking disturbed and stolen slumbers, and after listening to the cannon would again compose themselves to sleep, like men who felt no concern in a contest in which they did not participate. Others, more alive to events, and less drowsy, lavishly expended their rude jokes on those who were engaged in the struggle, or listened with a curious interest to mark the progress of the battle, by the uncertain index of its noise. When the fight had been some time concluded, Manual indulged his ill-humor more at length:

"There has been a party of pleasure within a league of us, Mr. Griffith," he said, "at which, but for our present subterraneous quarters, we might have been guests, and thus laid some claim to the honor of sharing the victory. But it is not too late to push the party on as far as the cliffs, where we shall be in sight of the vessels, and we may possibly establish a claim to our share of the prize-money."

"There is but little wealth to be gleaned from the capture of a king's cutter," returned Griffith; "and there would be less

honor were Barnstable encumbered with our additional and useless number."

"Useless!" repeated Manual; "there is much good service to be got out of twenty-three well-drilled and well-chosen marines; look at those fellows, Mr. Griffith, and then tell me if you think them an encumbrance in the hour of need."

Griffith smiled, and glanced his eye over the sleeping group—for when the firing had ceased the whole party had again sought their repose—and he could not help admiring the athletic and sinewy limbs that lay scattered around the gloomy vault in every posture that ease or whim dictated. From the stout frames of the men, his glance was directed to the stack of fire-arms, from whose glittering tubes and polished bayonets strong rays of light were reflected, even in that dark apartment. Manual followed the direction of his eyes, and the expression of his countenance, with inward exultation; but he had the forbearance to await his reply before he manifested his feelings more openly.

"I know them to be true men," said Griffith, "when needed, but—hark! what says he?"

"Who goes there? what noise is that?" repeated the sentinel, who was placed at the entrance of the vault.

Manual and Griffith sprang at the same instant from their places of rest, and stood, unwilling to create the slightest sounds, listening with most intense anxiety to catch the next indication of the cause of the guardian's alarm. A short stillness like that of death succeeded, during which Griffith whispered: "'Tis the pilot! his hour has been long passed."

The words were hardly spoken when the clashing of steel in fierce and sudden contact was heard, and at the next instant the body of the sentinel fell heavily along the stone steps that led to the open air, and rolled lifelessly to their feet, with the bayonet that had caused his death projecting from a deep wound in his breast.

"Away, away! sleepers, away!" shouted Griffith.

"To arms!" cried Manual, in a voice of thunder.

The alarmed marines, suddenly aroused from their slumbers at these thrilling cries, sprang on their feet in a confused cluster, and at that fatal moment a body of living fire darted into the vault, which re-echoed with the reports of twenty muskets. The uproar, the smoke, and the groans which escaped from many of his party, could not restrain Griffith another instant; his pistol was fired through the cloud which concealed the entrance of the vault, and he followed the leaden messenger, trailing a half-pike, and shouted to his men:

"Come on! follow, my lads; they are nothing but soldiers."

Even while he spoke, the ardent young seaman was rushing up the narrow passage; but as he gained the open space, his foot struck the writhing body of the victim of his shot, and he was precipitated headlong into a group of armed men.

"Fire, Manual, fire!" shouted the infuriated prisoner; "fire while you have them in a cluster."

"Ay, fire, Mr. Manual," said Borroughcliffe, with great coolness, "and shoot your own officer. Hold him up, boys! hold him up in front; the safest place is nearest to him."

"Fire!" repeated Griffith, making desperate efforts to release himself from the grasp of five or six men; "fire, and disregard me."

"If he do, he deserves to be hung," said Borroughcliffe; "such fine fellows are not sufficiently plenty to be shot at like wild beasts in chains. Take him from before the mouth of the vault, boys, and spread yourself to your duty."

At the time Griffith issued from the cover, Manual was mechanically employed in placing his men in order; and the marines, accustomed to do everything in concert and array, lost the moment to advance. The soldiers of Borroughcliffe reloaded their muskets and fell back behind different portions of the wall, where they could command the entrance to the vault with their fire, without much exposure to themselves. This disposition was very coolly reconnoitered by Manual in person, through some of the crevices in the wall, and he hesitated to advance

against the force he beheld while so advantageously posted. In this situation several shots were fired by either party without effect, until Borroughcliffe, perceiving the inefficacy of that mode of attack, summoned the garrison of the vault to a parley.

"Surrender to the forces of his majesty, King George the Third," he cried, "and I promise you quarter."

"Will you release your prisoner, and give us free passage to our vessels?" asked Manual; "the garrison to march out with all the honors of war, and officers to retain their side arms?"

"Inadmissible," returned Borroughcliffe, with great gravity; "the honor of his majesty's arms, and the welfare of the realm, forbid such a treaty; but I offer you safe quarter and honorable treatment."

"Officers to retain their side-arms, your prisoner to be released, and the whole party to return to America on parole, not to serve until exchanged?"

"Not granted," said Borroughcliffe. "The most that I can yield is a good potation of the generous southside; and if you are the man I take you for, you will know how to prize such an offer."

"In what capacity do you summon us to yield? as men entitled to the benefit of the laws of arms, or as rebels to your king?"

"Ye are rebels all, gentlemen," returned the deliberate Borroughcliffe, "and as such you must yield; though so far as good treatment and good fare goes, you are sure of it while in my power; in all other respects you lie at the mercy of his most gracious majesty."

"Then let his majesty show his gracious face, and come and take us, for I'll be——"

The asseveration of the marine was interrupted by Griffith, whose blood had sensibly cooled, and whose generous feelings were awakened in behalf of his comrades, now that his own fate seemed decided.

"Hold, Manual," he cried, "make no rash oaths. Captain Borroughcliffe, I am Edward Griffith, a lieutenant in the navy of the United American States, and I pledge you my honor to a parole——"

"Release him," said Borroughcliffe.

Griffith advanced between the two parties and spoke so as to be heard by both:

"I propose to descend to the vault and ascertain the loss and present strength of Captain Manual's party; if the latter be not greater than I apprehend, I shall advise him to surrender on the usual conditions of civilized nations."

"Go," said the soldier; "but stay; is he a half-and-half—an amphibious—pshaw! I mean a marine?"

"He is, sir, a captain in that corps—"

"The very man," interrupted Borroughcliffe; "I thought I recollected the liquid sound of his voice. It will be well to speak to him of the good fare of St. Ruth; and you may add that I know my man; I shall besiege instead of storming him, with the certainty of a surrender when his canteen is empty. The vault he is in holds no such beverage as the cellars of the Abbey."

Griffith smiled, in spite of the occasion and his vexation; and, making a slight inclination of his head, he passed into the vault, giving notice to his friends, by his voice, in order to apprise them who approached.

He found six of the marines, including the sentinel, lying dead on the ragged pavement, and four others wounded, but stifling their groans, by order of their commander, that they might not inform the enemy of his weakness. With the remainder of his command, Manual had intrenched himself behind the fragment of a wall that intersected the vault, and, regardless of the dismaying objects before him, maintained as bold a front, and as momentous an air, as if the fate of a walled town depended on his resolution and ingenuity.

"You see, Mr. Griffith," he cried, when the young sailor approached this gloomy but really formidable arrangement, "that nothing short of artillery can dislodge me; as for that drinking Englishman above, let him send down his men by platoons of eight or ten, and I'll pile them up on those steps four and five deep!"

"But artillery can and will be brought, if it should be necessary," said Griffith:

"and there is not the least chance of your eventual escape; it may be possible for you to destroy a few of the enemy, but you are too humane to wish to do it unnecessarily."

"No doubt," returned Manual, with a grim smile; "and yet methinks I could find present pleasure in shooting seven of them—yes, just seven, which is one more than they have struck off my roster."

"Remember your own wounded," added Griffith; "they suffer for want of aid, while you protract a useless defense."

A few smothered groans from the suffers seconded this appeal, and Manual yielded, though with a very ill grace, to the necessity of the case.

"Go, then, and tell him that we will surrender as prisoners of war," he said, "on the conditions that he grants me my side-arms, and that suitable care shall be taken of the sick—be particular to call them sick—for some lucky accident may yet occur before the compact is ratified, and I would not have him learn our loss."

Griffith, without waiting for a second bidding, hastened to Borroughcliffe with his intelligence.

"His side-arms!" repeated the soldier, when the other had done; "what are they, I pray thee, a marline-spike; for if his equipments be no better than thine own, my worthy prisoner, there is little need to quarrel about their ownership."

"Had I but ten of my meanest men, armed with such half-pikes, and Captain Borroughcliffe and his party were put at deadly strife with us," retorted Griffith, "he might find occasion to value our weapons more highly."

"Four such fiery gentlemen as yourself would have routed my command," returned Borroughcliffe, with undisturbed composure. "I trembled for my ranks when I saw you coming out of the smoke like a blazing comet from behind a cloud! and I shall never think of somersets without returning inward thanks to their inventor. But our treaty is made; let your comrades come forth and pile their arms."

Griffith communicated the result to the captain of marines, when the latter led the remnant of his party out of his sunken fortress into the open air.

The men, who had manifested throughout the whole business that cool subordination and unyielding front, mixed with the dauntless spirit that to-day distinguishes the corps of which they were members, followed their commander in sullen silence, and stacked their arms, with as much regularity and precision as if they had been ordered to relieve themselves after a march. When this necessary preliminary had been observed, Borroughcliffe unmasked his forces, and our adventurers found themselves once more in the power of the enemy, and under circumstances which rendered the prospect of a speedy release from their captivity nearly hopeless.

CHAPTER XX.

"If your father will do me an honor, so;
If not, let him kill the next Percy himself;
I look to be either earl or duke, I can assure you."
—FALSTAFF.

MANUAL cast sundry discontented and sullen looks from his captors to the remnant of his command, while the process of pinioning the latter was conducted, with much discretion, under the direction of Sergeant Drill, when, meeting in one of his dissatisfied glances with the pale and disturbed features of Griffith, he gave vent to his ill-humor by saying:

"This results from neglecting the precautions of military discipline. Had the command been with me, who, I may say without boasting, have been accustomed to the duties of the field, proper pickets would have been posted, and, instead of being caught like so many rabbits in a burrow to be smoked out with brimstone, we should have had an open field for the struggle; or we might have possessed ourselves of these walls, which I could have made good, for two hours at least, against the best regiment that ever wore King George's facings."

"Defend the outworks before retreating to the citadel!" cried Borroughcliffe; "'tis the game of war, and shows science;

but had you kept closer to your burrow, the rabbits might now have all been frisking about in that pleasant abode. The eyes of a timid hind were greeted this morning, while journeying near this wood, with a passing sight of armed men in strange attire; and, as he fled with an intent of casting himself into the sea, as fear will sometimes urge one of his kind to do, he luckily encountered me on the cliffs, who humanely saved his life, by compelling him to conduct us hither. There is often wisdom in science, my worthy contemporary in arms, but there is sometimes safety in ignorance."

"You have succeeded, sir, and have a right to be pleasant," said Manual, seating himself gloomily on a fragment of the ruin, and fastening his looks on the melancholy spectacle of the lifeless bodies at his feet; "but these men have been my own children, and you will excuse me if I cannot retort your pleasantries. Ah! Captain Borroughcliffe, you are a soldier, and know how to value merit. I took those very fellows, who sleep on these stones so quietly, from the hand of Nature, and made them the pride of our art. They were no longer men, but brave lads, who ate and drank, wheeled and marched, loaded and fired, laughed or were sorrowful, spoke or were silent, only at my will. As for soul, there was but one among them all, and that was in my keeping! Groan, my children, groan freely now; there is no longer a reason to be silent. I have known a single musket bullet cut the buttons from the coats of five of them in a row, without razing the skin of a man! I could ever calculate, with certainty, how many it would be necessary to expend in all regular service; but this accursed banditti business has robbed me of the choicest of my treasures. You stand at ease now, my children; groan, it will soften your anguish."

Borroughcliffe appeared to participate, in some degree, in the feelings of his captive, and he made a few appropriate remarks in the way of condolence, while he watched the preparations that were making by his own men to move. At length his orderly announced that substitutes for barrows were provided to sustain the wounded, and inquired if it were his pleasure to return to their quarters.

"Who has seen the horse?" demanded the captain; "which way did they march? Have they gained any tidings of the discovery of this party of the enemy?"

"Not from us, your honor," returned the sergeant; "they had ridden along the coast before we left the cliffs, and it was said their officer intended to scour the shore for several miles, and spread the alarm."

"Let him; it is all such gay gallants are good for.—Drill, honor is almost as scarce an article with our arms just now as promotion. We seem but the degenerate children of the heroes of Poictiers. You understand me, sergeant?"

"Some battle fou't by his majesty's troops against the French, your honor," returned the orderly, a little at a loss to comprehend the expression of his officer's eye.

"Fellow, you grow dull on victory," exclaimed Borroughcliffe; "come hither, I would give you orders. Do you think, Master Drill, there is more honor, or likely to be more profit, in this little morning's amusement than you and I can stand under?"

"I should not, your honor; we have both pretty broad shoulders——"

"That are not weakened by undue burdens of this nature," interrupted the captain, significantly; "if we let the news of this affair reach the ears of those hungry dragoons, they would charge upon us open-mouthed, like a pack of famished beagles, and claim at least half the credit, and certainly all the profit."

"But, your honor, there was not a man of them even——"

"No matter, Drill; I've known troops that have been engaged, and have suffered, cheated out of their share of victory by a well-worded dispatch. You know, fellow, that in the smoke and confusion of a battle a man can only see what passes near him, and common prudence requires that he only mention in his official letters what he knows can't be easily contradicted. Thus your Indians, and, indeed, all allie-

are not entitled to the right of a general order, any more than to the right of a parade. Now, I dare say, you have heard of a certain battle of Blenheim?"

"Lord! your honor, 'tis the pride of the British army, that and the Culloden! 'Twas when the great Corporal John beat the French king and all his lords and nobility, with half his nation in arms to back him."

"Ay! there is a little of the barrack readings in the account, but it is substantially true; know you how many French were in the field that day, Mister Drill?"

"I have never seen the totals of their muster, sir, in print; but, judging by the difference betwixt the nations, I should suppose some hundreds of thousands."

"And yet, to oppose this vast army, the duke had only ten or twelve thousand well-fed Englishmen! You look astounded, sergeant!"

"Why, your honor, that does seem rather an overmatch for an old soldier to swallow; the random shot would sweep away so small a force."

"And yet the battle was fought, and the victory won. But the Duke of Marlborough had a certain Mr. Eugene, with some fifty or sixty thousand High-Dutchers, to back him. You never heard of Mr. Eugene?"

"Not a syllable, your honor. I always thought that Corporal John——"

"Was a gallant and great general; you thought right, Mister Drill. So would a certain nameless gentleman be also, if his majesty would sign a commission to that effect. However, a majority is on the high-road to a regiment, and with even a regiment a man is comfortable! In plain English, Mister Drill, we must get our prisoners into the Abbey with as little noise as possible, in order that the horse may continue their gambols along the coast, without coming to devour our meal. All the fuss must be made at the war-office—for that trifle you may trust me; I think I know who holds a quill that is as good in its way as the sword he wears. Drill is a short name, and can easily be written within the folds of a letter."

"Lord, your honor!" said the gratified halberdier, "I'm sure such an honor is more—but your honor can ever command me."

"I do; and it is to be close, and to make your men keep close, until it shall be time to speak, when I pledge myself there shall be noise enough." Borroughcliffe shook his head, with a grave air, as he continued: "It has been a devil of a bloody fight, sergeant! look at the dead and wounded; a wood on each flank—supported by a ruin in the center. Oh! ink—ink can be spilt on the details with great effect. Go, fellow, and prepare to march."

Thus enlightened on the subject of his commander's ulterior views, the non-commissioned agent of the captain's wishes proceeded to give suitable instructions to the rest of the party, and to make the more immediate preparations for a march. The arrangements were soon completed. The bodies of the slain were left unsheltered, the seclusion of the ruin being deemed a sufficient security against the danger of any discovery, until darkness should favor their removal, in conformity with Borroughcliffe's plan to monopolize the glory. The wounded were placed on rude litters, composed of the muskets and blankets of the prisoners, when the conquerors and vanquished moved together in a compact body from the ruin, in such a manner as to make the former serve as a mask to conceal the latter from the curious gaze of any casual passenger. There was but little, indeed, to apprehend on this head, for the alarm and the terror, consequent on the exaggerated reports that flew through the country, effectually prevented any intruders on the usually quiet and retired domains of St. Ruth.

The party was emerging from the wood, when the crackling of branches, and rustling of dried leaves, announced, however, that an interruption of some sort was about to occur.

"If it should be one of their rascally patrols!" exclaimed Borroughcliffe, with very obvious displeasure, "they trample like a regiment of cavalry! but, gentlemen, you will acknowledge, yourselves, that we were retiring from the field of

battle when we met the re-enforcement, if it should prove to be such."

"We are not disposed, sir, to deny you the glory of having achieved your victory single-handed," said Griffith, glancing his eyes uneasily in the direction of the approaching sounds, expecting to see the pilot issue from the thicket in which he seemed to be entangled, instead of any detachment of his enemies.

"Clear the way, Cæsar!" cried a voice at no great distance from them; "break through the accursed vines on my right, Pompey—Press forward, my fine fellows, or we may be too late to smell even the smoke of the fight."

"Hum!" ejaculated the captain, with his philosophic indifference of manner entirely re-established, "this must be a Roman legion just awoke from a trance of some seventeen centuries, and that the voice of a centurion. We will halt, Mister Drill, and view the manner of an ancient march!"

While the captain was yet speaking, a violent effort disengaged the advancing party from the thicket of brambles in which they had been entangled, when two blacks, each bending under a load of fire-arms, preceded Colonel Howard into the clear space where Borroughcliffe had halted his detachment. Some little time was necessary to enable the veteran to arrange his disordered dress, and to remove the perspiring effects of the unusual toil from his features, before he could observe the addition to the captain's numbers.

"We heard your fire," cried the old soldier, making, at the same time, the most diligent application of his bandanna, "and I determined to aid you with a sortie, which, when judicially timed, has been the means of raising many a siege; though, had Montcalm rested quietly within his walls, the plains of Abr'am might never have drunk his blood."

"Oh! his decision was soldierly, and according to all the rules of war," exclaimed Manual; "and, had I followed his example, this day might have produced a different tale!"

"Why, who have we here?" cried the colonel in astonishment; "who is it that pretends to criticise battles and sieges, dressed in such a garb?"

"'Tis a dux incognitorum, my worthy host," said Borroughcliffe; "which means, in our English language, a captain of marines in the service of the American Congress."

"What! have you then met the enemy? ay! and by the fame of the immortal Wolfe, you have captured them!" cried the delighted veteran. "I was pressing on with a part of my garrison to your assistance, for I had seen that you were marching in this direction, and even the report of a few muskets was heard."

"A few!" interrupted the conqueror; "I know not what you call a few, my gallant and ancient friend; you may possibly have shot at each other by the week in the days of Wolfe, and Abercrombie, and Braddock; but I too have seen smart firing, and can hazard an opinion on such matters. There was as pretty a roll made by fire-arms at the battles on the Hudson as ever rattled from a drum; it is all over, and many live to talk of it; but this has been the most desperate affair, for the numbers, I ever was engaged in! I speak always with reference to the numbers. The wood is pretty well sprinkled with dead; and we have contrived to bring off a few of the desperately wounded with us, as you may perceive."

"Bless me!" exclaimed the surprised veteran, "that such an engagement should happen within musket shot of the Abbey, and I know so little of it! My faculties are on the wane, I fear, for the time has been when a single discharge would rouse me from the deepest sleep."

"The bayonet is a silent weapon," returned the composed captain with a significant wave of his hand; "'tis the Englishman's pride, and every experienced officer knows that one thrust with it is worth the fire of a whole platoon."

"What! did you come to the charge?" cried the colonel, "by the Lord, Borroughcliffe, my gallant young friend, I would have given twenty tierces of rice, and two able-bodied negroes, to have seen the fray!"

"It would have been a pleasant spectacle to witness, sans disputation," returned the captain; "but victory is ours without the presence of Achilles, this time. I have them, all that survive the affair; at least, all that have put foot on English soil."

"Ay! and the king's cutter has brought in the schooner!" added Colonel Howard. "Thus perish all rebellion for evermore! Where's Kit! my kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon; I would ask him what the laws of the realm next prescribe to loyal subjects. Here will be work for the jurors of Middlesex, Captain Borroughcliffe, if not for a secretary of state's warrant. Where is Kit, my kinsman; the ductile, the sagacious, the loyal Christopher?"

"The cacique '*non est*,' as more than one bailiff has said of sundry clever fellows in our regiment, when there has been a pressing occasion for their appearance," said the soldier; "but the cornet of horse has given me reason to believe that his provincial lordship, who repaired on board the cutter to give intelligence of the position of the enemy, continued there to share the dangers and honors of naval combat."

"Ay, 'tis like him!" cried the colonel, rubbing his hands with glee; "'tis like him! he has forgotten the law and his peaceful occupations, at the sounds of military preparations, and has carried the head of a statesman into the fight, with the ardor and thoughtlessness of a boy."

"The cacique is a man of discretion," observed the captain, with all his usual dryness of manner, "and will, doubtless, recollect his obligations to posterity and himself, though he be found entangled in the mazes of a combat. But I marvel that he does not return, for some time has now elapsed since the schooner struck her flag, as my own eyes have witnessed."

"You will pardon me, gentlemen," said Griffith, advancing toward them with uncontrollable interest; "but I have unavoidably heard part of your discourse, and cannot think you will find it necessary to withhold the whole truth from a disarmed captive: say you that a schooner has been captured this morning?"

"It is assuredly true," said Borroughcliffe, with a display of nature and delicacy in his manner that did his heart infinite credit; "but I forbore to tell you, because I thought your own misfortunes would be enough for one time. Mr. Griffith, this gentleman is Colonel Howard, to whose hospitality you will be indebted for some favors before we separate."

"Griffith!" echoed the colonel, in quick reply; "Griffith! what a sight for my old eyes to witness!—the child of worthy, gallant, loyal Hugh Griffith a captive, and taken in arms against his prince! Young man, young man, what would thy honest father, what would his bosom friend, my own poor brother, Harry, have said, had it pleased God that they had survived to witness this burning shame and lasting stigma on thy respectable name?"

"Had my father lived, he would now have been upholding the independence of his native land," said the young man, proudly. "I wish to respect even the prejudices of Colonel Howard, and beg he will forbear urging a subject on which I fear we never shall agree."

"Never, while thou art to be found in the ranks of rebellion!" cried the colonel. "Oh! boy, boy! how I could have loved and cherished thee, if the skill and knowledge obtained in the service of thy prince were now devoted to the maintenance of his unalienable rights! I loved thy father, worthy Hugh, even as I loved my own brother Harry."

"And his son should still be dear to you," interrupted Griffith, taking the reluctant hand of the colonel into both his own.

"Ah, Edward, Edward!" continued the softened veteran, "how many of my day-dreams have been destroyed by thy perversity! Nay, I know not that Kit, discreet and loyal as he is, could have found such favor in my eyes as thyself; there is a cast of thy father in that face and smile, Ned, that might have won me to anything short of treason—and then Cicely, provoking, tender, mutinous, kind, affectionate, good Cicely, would have been a link to unite us forever."

The youth cast a hasty glance at the deliberate Borroughcliffe, who, if he had

obeyed the impatient expression of his eye, would have followed the party that was slowly bearing the wounded toward the Abbey, before he yielded to his feelings, and answered:

"Nay, sir; let this, then, be the termination of our misunderstanding — your lovely niece shall be that link, and you shall be to me as your friend Hugh would have been had he lived, and to Cecilia twice a parent."

"Boy, boy," said the veteran, averting his face to conceal the workings of his muscles, "you talk idly; my word is now plighted to my kinsman Kit, and thy scheme is impracticable."

"Nothing is impracticable, sir, to youth and enterprise, when aided by age and experience like yours," returned Griffith; "this war must soon terminate."

"This war!" echoed the colonel, shaking loose the grasp which Griffith held on his arm; "ay! what of this war, young man? Is it not an accursed attempt to deny the rights of our gracious sovereign, and to place tyrants, reared in kennels, on the throne of princes! a scheme to elevate the wicked at the expense of the good! a project to aid unrighteous ambition, under the mask of sacred liberty and the popular cry of equality! as if there could be liberty without order! or equality of rights, where the privileges of the sovereign are not as sacred as those of the people!"

"You judge us harshly, Colonel Howard," said Griffith.

"I judge you!" interrupted the old soldier, who by this time thought the youth resembled any one rather than his friend Hugh; "it is not my province to judge you at all; if it were!—but the time will come, the time will come. I am a patient man, and can wait the course of things; yes, yes, age cools the blood, and we learn to suppress the passions and impatience of youth; but if the ministry would issue a commission of justice for the colonies, and put the name of old George Howard in it, I am a dog if there should be a rebel alive in twelve months!—Sir," turning sternly to Borroughcliffe, "in such a cause, I could prove a Roman, and hang —hang—yes, I do think, sir, I could hang my kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon!"

"Spare the cacique such an unnatural elevation before his time," returned the captain, with a grave wave of the hand; "behold," pointing toward the wood, "there is a more befitting subject for the gallows! Mr. Griffith, does yonder man call himself your comrade?"

The eyes of Colonel Howard and Griffith followed the direction of his finger, and the latter instantly recognized the pilot, standing in the skirts of the wood, with his arms folded, apparently surveying the condition of his friends.

"That man," said Griffith, in confusion and hesitating to utter even the equivocal truth that suggested itself, "that man does not belong to our ship's company."

"And yet he has been seen in *your* company," returned the incredulous Borroughcliffe; "he was the spokesman in last night's examination, Colonel Howard, and doubtless commands the rear guard of the rebels."

"You say true," cried the veteran. "Pompey! Cæsar! present! fire!"

The blacks started at the sudden orders of their master, of whom they stood in the deepest awe; and presenting their muskets they averted their faces, and, shutting their eyes, obeyed the bloody mandate.

"Charge!" shouted the colonel, flourishing the ancient sword with which he had armed himself, and pressing forward with all the activity that a recent fit of the gout would allow; "charge and exterminate the dogs with the bayonet! push on, Pompey—dress, boys, dress."

"If your friend stand this charge," said Borroughcliffe to Griffith, with unmoved composure, "his nerves are made of iron; such a charge would break the Coldstreams, with Pompey in the ranks!"

"I trust in God," cried Griffith, "he will have forbearance enough to respect the weakness of Colonel Howard!—he presents a pistol!"

"But he will not fire; the Romans deem it prudent to halt; nay, by Heaven, they countermarch to the rear. Hallo! Colonel Howard, my worthy host, fall

back on your re-enforcements; the wood is full of armed men; they cannot escape us; I only wait for the horse to cut off the retreat."

The veteran, who had advanced within a short distance of the single man who thus deliberately awaited the attack, halted at this summons; and by a glance of his eye ascertained that he stood alone. Believing the words of Borroughcliffe to be true, he slowly retired, keeping his face manfully toward his enemy, until he gained the support of the captain.

"Recall the troops, Borroughcliffe!" he cried, "and let us charge into the wood; they will fly before his majesty's arms, like guilty scoundrels, as they are. As for the negroes, I'll teach the black rascals to desert their master at such a moment! They say Fear is pale, but, damme, Borroughcliffe, if I do not believe his skin is black."

"I have seen him of all colors; blue, white, black, and partly-colored," said the captain. "I must take the command of matters on myself, however, my excellent host; let us retire into the Abbey, and trust me to cut off the remainder of the rebels."

In this arrangement the colonel reluctantly acquiesced, and the three followed the soldier to the dwelling, at a pace that was adapted to the infirmities of its master. The excitement of the onset, and the current of his ideas, had united, however, to banish every amicable thought from the breast of the colonel, and he entered the Abbey with the resolute determination of seeing justice dealt to Griffith and his companions, even though it should push them to the foot of the gallows.

As the gentlemen disappeared from his view, among the shrubbery of the grounds, the pilot replaced the weapon that was hanging from his hand in his bosom, and, turning with a saddened and thoughtful brow, he slowly re-entered the wood.

CHAPTER XXI.

——"When these prodigies
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say,
These are their reasons—They are natural;
For I believe they are portentous things
Unto the climate that they point upon."—CASCA

THE reader will discover, by referring to the time consumed in the foregoing events, that the *Ariel*, with her prize, did not anchor in the bay already mentioned until Griffith and his party had been for several hours in the custody of their enemies. The supposed capture of the rebel schooner was an incident that excited but little interest and no surprise among the people, who were accustomed to consider their seamen as invincible; and Barnstable had not found it a difficult task to practice his deception on the few rustics whom curiosity induced to venture alongside the vessels during the short continuance of daylight. When, however, the fogs of evening began to rise along the narrow basin, and the curvatures of its margin were lost in the single outline of its dark and gloomy border, the young seaman thought it time to apply himself in earnest to his duty. The *Alacrity*, containing all his own crew, together with the *Ariel's* wounded, was gotten silently under way; and driven easily before the heavy air that swept from the land, she drifted from the harbor, until the open sea lay before her, when her sails were spread, and she continued to make the best of her way in quest of the frigate. Barnstable had watched this movement with breathless anxiety; for, on an eminence that completely commanded the waters to some distance, a small but rude battery had been erected for the purpose of protecting the harbor against the depredations and insults of the smaller vessels of the enemy, and a guard of sufficient force to manage the two heavy guns it contained was maintained in the work at all times. He was ignorant how far his stratagem had been successful, and it was only when he heard the fluttering of the *Alacrity's* canvas, as she opened it to the breeze, that he felt he was yet secure.

"'Twill reach the Englishmen's ears," said the boy Merry, who stood on the forecastle of the schooner, by the side of his

commander, listening with breathless interest to the sounds; "they set a sentinel on the point, as the sun went down, and if he is a trifle better than a dead man, or a marine asleep, he will suspect something is wrong."

"Never!" returned Barnstable, with a long breath, that announced all his apprehensions were removed; "he will be more likely to believe it a mermaid fanning herself this cool evening, than to suspect the real fact—What say you, Master Coffin?—will the soldier smell the truth?"

"They're a dumb race," said the cockswain, casting his eyes over his shoulders to ascertain that none of their own marine guard was near him; "now there was our sergeant, who ought to know something, seeing that he has been afloat these four years, maintained, dead in the face and eyes of what every man, who has ever doubled Good Hope, knows to be true, that there was no such vessel to be fallen in with in them seas as the *Flying Dutchman!* and then, again, when I told him that he was a 'know-nothing,' and asked him if the *Dutchman* was a more unlikely thing than that there should be places where the inhabitants split the year into two watches, and had day for six months and night the rest of the time, the greenhorn laughed in my face, and I do believe he would have told me I lied, but for one thing."

"And what might that be?" asked Barnstable, gravely.

"Why, sir," returned Tom, stretching his bony fingers, as he surveyed his broad palm by the little light that remained, "though I am a peaceable man, I can be roused."

"And you have seen the *Flying Dutchman?*"

"I never doubled the East Cape; though I can find my way through Le Maire in the darkest night that ever fell from the heavens; but I have seen them that have seen her, and spoken her, too."

"Well, be it so; you must turn flying Yankee, yourself, to-night, Master Coffin. Man your boat at once, sir, and arm your crew."

The cockswain paused a moment before he proceeded to obey this unexpected order, and, pointing toward the battery, he inquired with infinite phlegm:

"For shore-work, sir? Shall we take the cutlasses and pistols? or shall we want the pikes?"

"There may be soldiers in our way, with their bayonets," said Barnstable, musing; "arms as usual, but throw a few long pikes into the boat; and harkye, Master Coffin, out with your tub and whale-line; for I see you have rigged yourself anew in that way."

The cockswain, who was moving from the forecastle, turned short at this new mandate, and, with an air of remonstrance, ventured to say:

"Trust an old whaler, Captain Barnstable, who has been used to these craft all his life. A whale-boat is made to pull with a tub and line in it, as naturally as a ship is made to sail with ballast, and——"

"Out with it, out with it," interrupted the other, with an impatient gesture, that his cockswain knew signified a positive determination. Heaving a sigh at what he deemed his commander's prejudice, Tom applied himself without further delay to the execution of the orders. Barnstable laid his hand familiarly on the shoulder of the boy, and led him to the stern of his little vessel in profound silence. The canvas hood that covered the entrance to the cabin was thrown partly aside; and, by the light of the lamp that was burning in the small apartment, it was easy to overlook, from the deck, what was passing beneath them. Dillon sat supporting his head with his hands, in a manner that shaded his face, but in an attitude that denoted deep and abstracted musing.

"I would that I could see the face of my prisoner," said Barnstable, in an undertone, that was audible only to his companion. "The eye of a man is a sort of light-house, to tell one how to steer into the haven of his confidence, boy."

"And sometimes a beacon, sir, to warn you there is no safe anchorage near him," returned the ready boy.

"Rogue!" muttered Barnstable, "your cousin Kate spoke there."

"If my cousin Plowden were here, Mr.

Barnstable, I know that her opinion of yon gentleman would not be at all more favorable."

"And yet, I have determined to trust him! Listen, boy, and tell me if I am wrong; you have a quick wit, like some others of your family, and may suggest something advantageous." The gratified midshipman swelled with the conscious pleasure of possessing his commander's confidence, and followed to the taff-rail, over which Barnstable leaned, while he delivered the remainder of his communication. "I have gathered from the long-shore-men who have come on this evening to stare at the vessel which the rebels have been able to build, that a party of seamen and marines have been captured in an old ruin near the Abbey of St. Ruth, this very day."

"'Tis Mr. Griffith!" exclaimed the boy.

"Ay! the wit of your cousin Katherine was not necessary to discover that. Now I have proposed to this gentleman with the Savannah face, that he should go into the Abbey and negotiate an exchange. I will give him for Griffith, and the crew of the *Alacrity* for Manual's command and the Tigers."

"The Tigers!" cried the lad, with emotion; "have they got my Tigers, too! would to God that Mr. Griffith had permitted me to land!"

"It was no boy's work they were about, and room was scarcer in their boat than live lumber! But this Mr. Dillon has accepted my proposition, and has pledged himself that Griffith shall return within an hour after he is permitted to enter the Abbey; will he redeem his honor from the pledge?"

"He may," said Merry, musing a moment; "for I believe he thinks the presence of Mr. Griffith under the same roof with Miss Howard a thing to be prevented, if possible; he may be true in this instance, though he has a hollow look."

"He has bad-looking light-houses, I will own," said Barnstable; "and yet he is a gentleman, and promises fair; 'tis unmanly to suspect him in such a matter, and I will have faith! Now listen, sir. The absence of older heads must throw great responsibility on your young shoulders; watch that battery as closely as if you were at the mast-head of your frigate, on the look-out for an enemy; the instant you see lights moving in it, cut, and run into the offing; you will find me somewhere under the cliffs, and you will stand off and on, keeping the Abbey in sight, until you fall in with us."

Merry gave an attentive ear to these and divers other solemn injunctions that he received from his commander, who, having sent the officer next to himself in authority in charge of the prize (the third in command being included in the list of the wounded), was compelled to intrust his beloved schooner to the vigilance of a lad whose years gave no promise of the experience and skill that he actually possessed.

When his admonitory instructions were ended, Barnstable stepped again to the opening in the cabin hood, and, for a single moment before he spoke, once more examined the countenance of his prisoner with a keen eye. Dillon had removed his hands from before his sallow features; and, as if conscious of the scrutiny his looks were to undergo, had concentrated the whole expression of his forbidding aspect in a settled gaze of hopeless submission to his fate. At least, so thought his captor, and the idea touched some of the finer feeling in the bosom of the generous young seaman. Discarding, instantly, every suspicion of his prisoner's honor, as alike unworthy of them both, Barnstable summoned him, in a cheerful voice, to the boat. There was a flashing of the features of Dillon at this call, which gave an indefinable expression to his countenance that again startled the sailor; but it was so very transient, and could so easily be mistaken for a smile of pleasure at his promised liberation, that the doubts it engendered passed away almost as speedily as the equivocal expression itself. Barnstable was in the act of following his companion into the boat, when he felt himself detained by a slight hold of his arm.

"What would you have?" he asked of the midshipman who had given him the signal.

"Do not trust too much to that Dillon, sir," returned the anxious boy, in a whisper. "If you had seen his face, as I did, when the binnacle light fell upon it, as he came up the cabin-ladder, you would put no faith in him."

"I should have seen no beauty," said the generous lieutenant, laughing; "but there is Long Tom, as hard-featured a youth of two score and ten as ever washed in brine, who has a heart as big, ay, bigger, than that of a kraken. A bright watch to you, boy, and remember, a keen eye on the battery." As he was yet speaking, Barnstable crossed the gunwale of his little vessel, and it was not until he was seated by the side of his prisoner that he continued, aloud, "Cast the stops off your sails, Mr. Merry, and see all clear to make a run of everything. Recollect, you are short-handed, sir. God bless ye! and d'ye hear? if there is a man among you who shuts more than one eye at a time, I'll make him, when I get back, open both wider than if Tom Coffin's friend, the *Flying Dutchman*, was booming down upon him. God bless ye, Merry, my boy; give 'em the square-sail, if this breeze off-shore holds on till morning—shove off."

As Barnstable gave the last order he fell back on his seat, and, drawing back his boat-cloak around him, maintained a profound silence until they had passed the two small headlands that formed the mouth of the harbor. The men pulled, with muffled oars, their long, vigorous strokes, and the boat glided with amazing rapidity past the objects that could be yet indistinctly seen along the dim shore. When, however, they gained the open ocean, and the direction of their little bark was changed to one that led them in line with the coast, and within the shadows of the cliffs, the cockswain, deeming that the silence was no longer necessary to their safety, ventured to break it, as follows:

"A square-sail is a good sail to carry on a craft, dead afore it, and in a heavy sea; but, if fifty years can teach a man to know the weather, it's my judgment that, should the *Ariel* break ground after the night turns at eight bells, she'll need her mainsail to hold her up to her course."

The lieutenant started at this sudden interruption, and, casting his cloak from his shoulders, he looked abroad on the waters, as if seeking those portentous omens which disturbed the imagination of his cockswain.

"How, now, Tom," he said, sharply; "have ye turned croaker in your old age? what see you, to cause such an old woman's ditty?"

"'Tis no song of an old woman," returned the cockswain with solemn earnestness, "but the warning of an old man; and one who has spent his days where there were no hills to prevent the winds of heaven from blowing on him, unless they were hills of salt water and foam. I judge, sir, there'll be a heavy northwester setting in upon us afore the morning watch is called."

Barnstable knew the experience of his old messmate too well not to feel uneasiness at such an opinion, delivered in so confident a manner; but after again surveying the horizon, the heavens and the ocean, he said, with a continued severity of manner:

"Your prophecy is idle this time, Master Coffin; everything looks like a dead calm. This swell is what is left from the last blow, the mist overhead is nothing but the nightly fog, and you can see, with your own eyes, that it is driving seaward; even this land breeze is nothing but the air of the ground mixing with that of the ocean: it is heavy with dew and fog, but it's as sluggish as a Dutch galiot.

"Ay, sir, it is damp, and there is little of it," rejoined Tom; "but, as it comes only from the shore, so it never goes far on the water. It is hard to learn the true signs of the weather, Captain Barnstable, and none get to know them well but such as study little else or feel but little else. There is only One who can see the winds of heaven, or who can tell when a hurricane is to begin, or where it will end. Still, a man isn't like a whale or a porpoise, that takes the air in his nostrils, but never knows whether it is a southeaster or a northwester that he feeds upon. Look broad off to leeward, sir; see the streak of clear sky shining under the

mists; take an old seafaring man's word for it, Captain Barnstable, that, whenever the light shines out of the heavens in that fashion, 'tis never done for nothing; besides, the sun set in a dark bank of clouds, and the little moon was dry and windy."

Barnstable listened attentively, and with increasing concern, for he well knew that his cockswain possessed a quick and almost unerring judgment of the weather, notwithstanding the confused medley of superstitious omens and signs with which it was blended; but, again throwing himself back in his boat, he muttered:

"Then let it blow; Griffith is worth a heavier risk, and, if the battery can't be cheated, it can be carried."

Nothing further passed on the state of the weather. Dillon had not ventured a single remark since he entered the boat, and the cockswain had the discretion to understand that his officer was willing to be left to his own thoughts. For nearly an hour they pursued their way with diligence; the sinewy seamen who wielded the oars urging their light boat along the edge of the surf with unabated velocity, and apparently with untired exertions. Occasionally Barnstable would cast an inquiring glance at the little inlets that they passed, or would note, with a seaman's eye, the small portions of sandy beach that were scattered here and there along the rocky boundaries of the coast. One, in particular, a deeper inlet than common, where a run of fresh water was heard gurgling as it met the tide, he pointed out to his cockswain, by significant but silent gestures, as a place to be especially noted. Tom, who understood the signal as intended for his own eye alone, made his observations on the spot with equal taciturnity, but with all the minuteness that would distinguish one long accustomed to find his way, whether by land or water, by landmarks and the bearings of different objects. Soon after this silent communication between the lieutenant and his cockswain, the boat was suddenly turned, and was in the act of dashing upon the spit of sand before it, when Barnstable checked the movement by his voice:

"Hold water!" he said; "'tis the sound of oars!"

The seamen held their boat at rest, while a deep attention was given to the noise that had alarmed the ears of their commander.

"See, sir," said the cockswain, pointing toward the eastern horizon; "it is just rising into the streak of light to seaward of us—now it settles in the trough—ah! here you have it again!"

"By heaven!" cried Barnstable, "'tis a man-of-war's stroke it pulls; I saw the oar-blades as they fell! and, listen to the sound! neither your fisherman nor your smuggler pulls such a regular oar."

Tom had bowed his head nearly to the water, in the act of listening, and now, raising himself, spoke with confidence:

"That is the Tiger; I know the stroke of her crew as well as I do of my own. Mr. Merry has made them learn the new-fashioned jerk, as they dip their blades, and they feather with such a roll in their rowlocks. I could swear to the stroke."

"Hand me the night-glass," said the commander, impatiently; "I can catch them, as they are lifted into the streak. You are right, by every star in our flag, Tom!—but there is only one man in her stern-sheets. By my good eyes, I believe it is that accursed pilot, sneaking from the land, and leaving Griffith and Manual to die in English prisons. To the shore with you—beach her at once!"

The order was no sooner given than it was obeyed, and, in less than two minutes, the impatient Barnstable, Dillon and the cockswain were standing together on the sands.

The impression he had received, that his friends were abandoned to their fate by the pilot, urged the generous young seaman to hasten the departure of the prisoner as he was fearful every moment might interpose some new obstacle to the success of his plans.

"Mr. Dillon," he said, the instant they were landed, "I exact no new promise—your honor is already plighted——"

"If oaths can make it stronger," interrupted Dillon, "I will take them."

"Oaths cannot—the honor of a gentle-

man is at all times enough. I shall send my cockswain with you to the Abbey, and you will either return with him, in person, within two hours, or give Mr. Griffith and Captain Manual to his guidance. Proceed, sir—you are conditionally free; there is an easy opening by which to ascend the cliffs."

Dillon once more thanked his generous captor, and then proceeded to force his way up the rough eminence.

"Follow, and obey his instructions," said Barnstable to his cockswain, aloud.

Tom, long accustomed to implicit obedience, handled his harpoon, and was quietly following in the footsteps of his new leader, when he felt the hand of the lieutenant on his shoulder.

"You saw where the brook emptied over the hillock of sand?" said Barnstable, in an undertone.

Tom nodded assent.

"You will find us there riding without the surf; 'twill not do to trust too much to an enemy."

The cockswain made a gesture of great significance with his weapon that was intended to indicate the danger their prisoner would incur should he prove false; when, applying the wooden end of the harpoon to the rocks, he ascended the ravine at a rate that soon brought him to the side of his companion.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Ah, marry, let me have him to sit under;
He's like to be a cold soldier."—FALSTAFF.

BARNSTABLE lingered on the sands for a few minutes, until the footsteps of Dillon and the cockswain were no longer audible, when he ordered his men to launch their boat once more into the surf. While the seamen pulled leisurely toward the place he had designated as the point where he would await the return of Tom, the lieutenant first began to entertain serious apprehensions concerning the good faith of his prisoner. Now that Dillon was beyond his control, his imagination presented, in very vivid colors, several little circumstances in the other's conduct, which might readily excuse some doubts of his good faith; and, by the time they had reached the place of rendezvous, and had cast a light grapnel into the sea, his fears had rendered him excessively uncomfortable. Leaving the lieutenant to his reflections on this unpleasant subject, we shall follow Dillon and his fearless and unsuspecting companion in their progress toward St. Ruth.

The mists to which Tom had alluded in his discussion with his commander on the state of the weather, appeared to be settling nearer to the earth, and assuming more decidedly the appearance of a fog, hanging above them in sluggish volumes but little agitated by the air. The consequent obscurity added deeply to the gloom of the night, and it would have been difficult for one less acquainted than Dillon with the surrounding localities to find the path which led to the dwelling of Colonel Howard. After some little search this desirable object was effected; and the civilian led the way, with rapid strides, toward the Abbey.

"Ay, ay?" said Tom, who followed his steps, and equaled his paces without any apparent effort, "you shore-people have an easy way to find your course and distance when you get into the track. I was once left by the craft I belonged to, in Boston, to find my way to Plymouth, which is a matter of fifteen leagues, or thereaway; and so, finding nothing was bound up the bay, after laying-by for a week, I concluded to haul aboard my landtacks. I spent the better part of another week in a search for some hooker on board which I might work my passage across the country, for money was as scarce then with old Tom Coffin as it is now, and is likely to be, unless the fisheries get a good luff soon; but it seems that nothing but your horse-flesh, and horned cattle and jackasses, are privileged to do the pulling and hauling in your shore-hookers; and I was forced to pay a week's wages for a berth, besides keeping a banyan on a mouthful of bread and cheese, from the time we hove-up in Boston till we came to Plymouth town."

"It was certainly an unreasonable exaction on the part of the wagoners, from a man in your situation," said Dillon, in a friendly, soothing tone of voice, that denoted a willingness to pursue the conversation.

"My situation was that of a cabin passenger," returned the cockswain; "for there was but one hand forward, besides the cattle I mentioned—that was he who steered—and an easy berth he had of it; for there his course lay atween walls of stone and fences; and, as for his reckoning, why, they had stuck up bits of stone on an end with his day's work footed up, ready to his hand, every half league or so. Besides, the landmarks were so plenty, that a man with half an eye might steer her, and no fear of getting to leeward."

"You must have found yourself, as it were, in a new world," observed Dillon.

"Why, to me, it was pretty much the same as if I had been set afloat in a strange country, though I may be said to be a native of those parts, being born on the coast. I had often heard shore-men say that there was as much 'arth as water in the world, which I always set down as a rank lie, for I've sailed with a flowing sheet months an-end without falling in with as much land or rock as would answer a gull to lay its eggs on; but I will own that atween Boston and Plymouth we were out of sight of water for as much as two full watches!"

Dillon pursued this interesting subject with diligence; and by the time they reached the wall, which inclosed the large paddock that surrounded the Abbey, the cockswain was deeply involved in a discussion of the comparative magnitude of the Atlantic Ocean and the Continent of America.

Avoiding the principal entrance of the building, through the great gates which communicated with the court in front, Dillon followed the windings of the wall until it led them to a wicket, which he knew was seldom closed for the night until the hour for general rest had arrived. Their way now lay in the rear of the principal edifice, and soon conducted them to the confused pile which contained the offices. The cockswain followed his companion with a confiding reliance on his knowledge and good faith, that was somewhat increased by the freedom of communication that had been maintained during their walk from the cliffs. He did not perceive anything extraordinary in the other's stopping at the room, which had been provided as a sort of barracks for the soldiers of Captain Borroughcliffe.

A conference which took place between Dillon and the sergeant was soon ended, when the former beckoned to the cockswain to follow, and, taking a circuit round the whole of the offices, they entered the Abbey together, by the door through which the ladies had issued, when in quest of the three prisoners, as has been already related. After a turn or two among the narrow passages of that part of the edifice, Tom, whose faith in the facilities of land navigation began to be a little shaken, found himself following the guide through a long dark gallery, that was terminated at the end toward which they were approaching, by a half-open door, that admitted a glimpse into a well-lighted and comfortable apartment. To this door Dillon hastily advanced, and, throwing it open, the cockswain enjoyed a full view of the very scene that we have described, in introducing Colonel Howard to the acquaintance of the reader, and under circumstances of great similitude. The cheerful fire of coal, the strong and glaring lights, the tables of polished mahogany, and the blushing fields, were still the same in appearance, while the only perceptible change was the number of those who partook of the cheer. The master of the mansion, and Borroughcliffe, were seated opposite to each other, employed in discussing the events of the day, and diligently pushing to and fro the glittering vessel that contained a portion of the generous liquor they both loved so well; a task which each moment rendered lighter.

"If Kit would but return," exclaimed the veteran, whose back was to the opening door, "bringing with him his honest brows encircled, as they will be, or ought to be, with laurel, I should be the happiest

old fool, Borroughcliffe, in his majesty's realm of Great Britain!"

The captain, who felt the necessity for the unnatural restraint he had imposed on his thirst to be removed by the capture of his enemies, pointed toward the door with one hand, while he grasped the sparkling reservoir of the "south side" with the other, and answered:

"Lo! the cacique himself! his brow inviting the diadem—ha! who have we in his highness's train? By the Lord, Sir Cacique, if you travel with a body-guard of such grenadiers, old Frederick of Prussia himself will have occasion to envy you the corps! a clear six-footer in Nature's stockings! and the arms as unique as the armed!"

The colonel did not, however, attend to half of his companion's exclamations, but, turning, he beheld the individual he had so much desired, and received him with a delight proportioned to the unexpectedness of the pleasure. For several minutes Dillon was compelled to listen to the rapid questions of his venerable relative, to all of which he answered with a prudent reserve, that might, in some measure, have been governed by the presence of the cockswain. Tom stood with infinite composure, leaning on his harpoon, and surveying, with a countenance where wonder was singularly blended with contempt, the furniture and arrangements of an apartment that was far more splendid than any he had before seen. In the meantime, Borroughcliffe entirely disregarded the private communications that passed between his host and Dillon, which gradually became more deeply interesting, and finally drew them to a distant corner of the apartment; but, taking a most undue advantage of the absence of the gentleman, who had so lately been his boon companion, he swallowed one potation after another, as if a double duty had developed on him in consequence of the desertion of the veteran. Whenever his eye did wander from the ruby tint of his glass, it was to survey with unrepressed admiration the inches of the cockswain, about whose stature and frame there were numberless excellent points to attract the gaze of a recruiting-officer. From this double pleasure, the captain was, however, at last summoned to participate in the councils of his friends.

Dillon was spared the disagreeable duty of repeating the artful tale he had found it necessary to palm on the colonel by the ardor of the veteran himself, who executed the task in a manner that gave to the treachery of his kinsman every appearance of a justifiable artifice, and of unshaken zeal in the cause of his prince. In substance, Tom was to be detained as a prisoner and the party of Barnstable were to be entrapped and, of course, share a similar fate. The sunken eye of Dillon cowered before the steady gaze which Borroughcliffe fastened on him as the latter listened to the plaudits the colonel lavished on his cousin's ingenuity; but the hesitation that lingered in the soldier's manner vanished when he turned to their unsuspecting prisoner, who was continuing his survey of the apartment, while he innocently imagined the consultations he witnessed were merely the proper and preparatory steps to his admission into the presence of Mr. Griffith.

"Drill," said Borroughcliffe, aloud, "advance and receive your orders." The cockswain turned quickly at this sudden mandate, and, for the first time, perceived that he had been followed into the gallery by the orderly and two files of recruits, armed. "Take this man to the guard-room and feed him, and see that he dies not of thirst."

There was nothing alarming in this order, and Tom was following the soldiers, in obedience to a gesture from their captain, when their steps were arrested in the gallery by the cry of "Halt!"

"On recollection, Drill," said Borroughcliffe, in a tone from which all dictatorial sounds were banished, "show the gentleman into my own room, and see him properly supplied."

The orderly gave such an intimation of his comprehending the meaning of his officer as the latter was accustomed to receive, when Borroughcliffe returned to his bottle, and the cockswain followed his guide, with the alacrity and good-will

that were not a little increased by the repeated mention of the cheer that awaited him.

Luckily for the impatience of Tom, the quarters of the captain were at hand, and the promised entertainment by no means slow in making its appearance. The former was an apartment that opened from a lesser gallery, which communicated with the principal passage already mentioned; and the latter was a bountiful but ungarnished supply of that staple of the British isles called roast beef; of which the kitchen of Colonel Howard was never without a due and loyal provision. The sergeant, who certainly understood one of the signs of his captain to imply an attack on the citadel of the cockswain's brain, mingled, with his own hands, a potation that he styled a rummer of grog, and which he thought would have felled the animal itself that Tom was so diligently masticating, had it been alive and in its vigor. Every calculation that was made on the infirmity of the cockswain's intellect, under the stimulus of Jamaica, was, however, futile. He swallowed glass after glass, with prodigious relish, but at the same time, with immovable steadiness; and the eyes of the sergeant, who felt it incumbent to do honor to his own cheer, were already glistening in his head, when, happily for the credit of his heart, a tap at the door announced the presence of his captain, and relieved him from the impending disgrace of being drunk blind by a recruit.

As Borroughcliffe entered the apartment, he commanded his orderly to retire, adding:

"Mr. Dillon will give you instructions, which you are implicitly to obey."

Drill, who had sense enough remaining to apprehend the displeasure of his officer, should the latter discover his condition, quickened his departure, and the cockswain soon found himself alone with the captain. The vigor of Tom's attacks on the remnant of the sirloin was now much abated, leaving in its stead that placid quiet which is apt to linger about the palate long after the cravings of the appetite have been appeased. He had seated himself on one of the trunks of Borroughcliffe, utterly disdaining the use of a chair; and, with the trencher in his lap, was using his own jack-knife on the dilapidated fragment of the ox, with something of that nicety with which the female ghoul of the Arabian Tales might be supposed to pick her rice with the point of a bodkin. The captain drew a seat nigh the cockswain; and, with a familiarity and kindness infinitely condescending, when the difference in their several conditions is considered, he commenced the following dialogue:

"I hope you have found your entertainment to your liking, Mr. a—a I must own my ignorance of your name."

"Tom," said the cockswain, keeping his eyes roaming over the contents of the trencher; "commonly called Long Tom, by my shipmates."

"You have sailed with discreet men, and able navigators, it will seem, as they understood longitude so well," rejoined the captain; "but you have a patronymic —I would say another name?"

"Coffin," returned the cockswain; "I'm called Tom when there is any hurry, such as letting go the haul-yards, or a sheet; Long Tom, when they want to get to windward of an old seaman, by fair weather; and Long Tom Coffin when they wish to hail me so that none of my cousins of the same name, about the islands, shall answer; for I believe the best man among them can't measure much over a fathom, taking him from his headworks to his heel."

"You are a most deserving fellow," cried Borroughcliffe, "and it is painful to think to what a fate the treachery of Mr. Dillon has consigned you."

The suspicions of Tom, if he ever had any, were lulled to rest too effectually by the kindness he had received, to be awak ened by this equivocal lament; he there fore, after renewing his intimacy with the rummer, contented himself by saying, with a satisfied simplicity:

"I am consigned to no one, carrying no cargo but this Mr. Dillon, who is to give me Mr. Griffith in exchange, or go back to the *Ariel* himself, as my prisoner."

"Ah! my good friend, I fear you will

find, when the time comes to make this exchange, that he will refuse to do either."

"But I'll be d——d if he don't do one of them! my orders are to see it done, and back he goes; or Mr. Griffith, who is as good a seaman, for his years, as ever trod a deck, slips his cable from this here anchorage."

Borroughcliffe affected to eye his companion with great commiseration; an exhibition of compassion that was, however, completely lost on the cockswain, whose nerves were strung to their happiest tension by his repeated libations, while his wit was, if anything, quickened by the same cause, though his own want of guile rendered him slow to comprehend its existence in others. Perceiving it necessary to speak plainly, the captain renewed the attack in a more direct manner:

"I am sorry to say that you will not be permitted to return to the *Ariel;* and that your commander, Mr. Barnstable, will be a prisoner within the hour; and, in fact, that your schooner will be taken before the morning breaks."

"Who'll take her?" asked the cockswain with a grim smile, on whose feelings, however, this combination of threatened calamities was beginning to make some impression.

"You must remember that she lies immediately under the heavy guns of a battery that can sink her in a few minutes; an express has already been sent to acquaint the commander of the work with the *Ariel's* true character; and, as the wind has already begun to blow from the ocean, her escape is impossible."

The truth, together with its protentous consequences, now began to glare across the faculties of the cockswain. He remembered his own prognostics on the weather, and the helpless situation of the schooner, deprived of more than half her crew, and left to the keeping of a boy, while her commander himself was on the eve of captivity. The trencher fell from his lap to the floor, his head sunk on his knees, his face was concealed between his broad palms and, in spite of every effort the old seaman could make to conceal his emotion, he fairly groaned aloud.

For a moment the better feelings of Borroughcliffe prevailed; and he paused as he witnessed this exhibition of suffering in one whose head was already sprinkled with the marks of time; but his habits, and the impressions left by many years passed in collecting victims for the wars, soon resumed their ascendency, and the recruiting officer diligently addressed himself to an improvement of his advantage.

"I pity from my heart the poor lads whom artifice or mistaken notions of duty may have led astray, and who will thus be taken in arms against their sovereign; but, as they are found in the very island of Britain, they must be made examples to deter others. I fear that, unless they can make their peace with government, they will all be condemned to death."

"Let them make their peace with God, then; your government can do but little to clear the log account of a man whose watch is up for this world."

"But, by making their peace with those who have the power, their lives may be spared," said the captain, watching with keen eyes the effect his words produced on the cockswain.

"It matters but little, when a man hears the messenger pipe his hammock down for the last time; he keeps his watch in another world, though he goes below in this. But to see the wood and iron, that has been put together after such molds as the *Ariel's*, go into strange hands, is a blow that a man may remember long after the purser's books have been squared against his name forever! I would rather that twenty shots should strike my old carcass, than one should hull the schooner that didn't pass out above her water-line."

Borroughcliffe replied, somewhat carelessly: "I may be mistaken, after all; and instead of putting any of you to death they may place you all on board the prison-ships, where you may yet have a merry time of it these ten or fifteen years to come."

"How's that, shipmate!" cried the cockswain, with a start; "a prison-ship, d'ye say? you may tell them they can save the expense of one man's rations by

hanging him, if they please, and that is old Tom Coffin."

"There is no answering for their caprice; to-day they may order a dozen of you to be shot for rebels; to-morrow they may choose to consider you as prisoners of war, and send you to the hulks for a dozen years."

"Tell them, brother, that I'm a rebel, will ye? and ye'll tell 'em no lie—one that has fou't them since Manly's time, in Boston Bay, to this hour. I hope the boy will blow her up! it will be the death of poor Richard Barnstable to see her in the hands of the English!"

"I know of one way," said Borroughcliffe, affecting to muse, "and but one, that will certainly avert the prison-ship; for, on second thoughts, they will hardly put you to death."

"Name it, friend," cried the cockswain, raising from his seat in evident perturbation, "and if it lies in the power of man, it shall be done."

"Nay," said the captain, dropping his hand familiarly on the shoulder of the other, who listened with the most eager attention, "'tis easily done, and no dreadful thing in itself; you are used to gunpowder and know its smell from otto of roses!"

"Ay, ay," cried the impatient old seaman; "I have had it flashing under my nose by the hour; what then?"

"Why, then, what I have to propose will be nothing to a man like you—you found the beef wholesome, and the grog mellow?"

"Ay, ay, all well enough: but what is that to an old sailor?" asked the cockswain, unconsciously grasping the collar of Borroughcliffe's coat in his agitation; "what then?"

The captain manifested no displeasure at this unexpected familiarity, but smiled with suavity as he unmasked the battery, from behind which he had hitherto carried on his attacks.

"Why, then, you have only to serve your king as you have before served the Congress—and let me be the man to show you your colors."

The cockswain stared at the speaker intently, but it was evident he did not clearly comprehend the nature of the proposition, and the captain pursued the subject:

"In plain English, enlist in my company, my fine fellow, and your life and liberty are both safe."

Tom did not laugh aloud, for that was a burst of feeling in which he was seldom known to indulge; but every feature of his weather-beaten visage contracted into an expression of bitter, ironical contempt. Borroughcliffe felt the iron fingers, that still grasped his collar, gradually tightening about his throat, like a vise; and, as the arm slowly contracted, his body was drawn, by a power that it was in vain to resist, close to that of the cockswain, who, when their faces were within a foot of each other, gave vent to his emotions in words:

"A messmate before a shipmate; a shipmate before a stranger; a stranger before a dog—but a dog before a soldier!"

As Tom concluded, his nervous arm was suddenly extended to the utmost, the fingers relinquishing their grasp at the same time; and, when Borroughcliffe recovered his disordered faculties, he found himself in a distant corner of the apartment, prostrate among a confused pile of chairs, tables and wearing apparel. In endeavoring to rise from this humble posture, the hand of the captain fell on the hilt of his sword, which had been included in the confused assemblage of articles produced by his overthrow.

"How now, scoundrel!" he cried, baring the glittering weapon, and springing on his feet; "you must be taught your distance, I perceive."

The cockswain seized the harpoon which leaned against the wall, and dropped its barbed extremity within a foot of the breast of his assailant, with an expression of the eye that denoted the danger of a nearer approach. The captain, however, wanted not for courage, and, stung to the quick by the insult he had received, he made a desperate parry, and attempted to pass within the point of the novel weapon of his adversary. The slight shock was followed by a sweeping whirl of the harpoon, and Borroughcliffe found

himself without arms, completely at the mercy of his foe. The bloody intentions of Tom vanished with his success; for, laying aside his weapon, he advanced upon his antagonist and seized him with an open palm. One more struggle, in which the captain discovered his incompetency to make any defense against the strength of a man who managed him as if he had been a child, decided the matter.

When the captain was passive in the hands of his foe, the cockswain produced sundry pieces of sennet, marline and ratlin-stuff, from his pockets, which appeared to contain as great a variety of small cordage as a boatswain's storeroom, and proceeded to lash the arms of the conquered soldier to the posts of his bed, with a coolness that had not been disturbed since the commencement of hostilities, a silence that seemed inflexible, and a dexterity that none but a seaman could equal. When this part of his plan was executed Tom paused a moment and gazed around him as if in quest of something. The naked sword caught his eye, and, with this weapon in his hand, he deliberately approached his captive, whose alarm prevented his observing that the cockswain had snapped the blade asunder from the handle, and that he had already encircled the latter with marline.

"For God's sake," exclaimed Borroughcliffe, "murder me not in cold blood!"

The silver hilt entered his mouth as the words issued from it, and the captain found, while the line was passed and repassed, in repeated involutions, across the back of his neck, that he was in a condition to which he often subjected his own men, when unruly, and which is universally called being "gagged." The cockswain now appeared to think himself entitled to all the privileges of a conqueror; for, taking the light in his hand, he commenced a scrutiny into the nature and quality of the worldly effects that lay at his mercy. Sundry articles, that belonged to the equipments of a soldier, were examined and cast aside with great contempt, and divers garments of plainer exterior were rejected as unsuited to the frame of the victor. He, however, soon encountered two articles of a metal that is universally understood. But uncertainty as to their use appeared greatly to embarrass him. The circular prongs of these curiosities were applied to either hand, to the wrists, and even to the nose, and the little wheels at their opposite extremity were turned and examined with as much curiosity and care as a savage would expend on a watch, until the idea seemed to cross the mind of the honest seaman that they formed part of the useless trappings of a military man, and he cast them aside as utterly worthless. Borroughcliffe, who watched every movement of his conqueror, with a good-humor that would have restored perfect harmony between them, could he but have expressed half what he felt, witnessed the safety of a favorite pair of spurs with much pleasure, though nearly suffocated by the mirth that was unnaturally repressed. At length the cockswain found a pair of handsomely-mounted pistols, a sort of weapon with which he seemed quite familiar. They were loaded, and the knowledge of that fact appeared to remind Tom of the necessity of departing, by bringing to his recollection the danger of his commander and of the *Ariel*. He thrust the weapons into the canvas belt that encircled his body, and, grasping his harpoon, approached the bed, where Borroughcliffe was seated in duress.

"Harkye, friend," said the cockswain, "may the Lord forgive you, as I do, for wishing to make a soldier of a seafaring man, and one who has followed the waters since he was an hour old, and one who hopes to die off soundings, and to be buried in brine! I wish you no harm, friend; but you'll have to keep a stopper on your conversation till such time as some of your messmates call in this way, which I hope will be as soon after I get an offing as may be."

With these amicable wishes the cockswain departed, leaving Borroughcliffe the light, and the undisturbed possession of his apartment, though not in the most easy or the most enviable situation imaginable. The captain heard the bolt of his lock turn, and the key rattle as the cock-

swain withdrew it from the door—two precautionary steps, which clearly indicated that the vanquisher deemed it prudent to secure his retreat, by insuring the detention of the vanquished, for at least a time.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"While Vengeance, in the lurid air,
Lifts her red arm, exposed and bare,
Who, Fear, this ghastly train can see,
And look not madly wild, like thee!"
—COLLINS.

IT is certain that Tom Coffin had devised no settled plan of operations, when he issued from the apartment of Borroughcliffe, if we except a most resolute determination to make the best of his way to the *Ariel*, and to share her fate, let it be either to sink or swim. But this was a resolution much easier formed by the honest seaman than executed in his present situation. He would have found it less difficult to extricate a vessel from the dangerous shoals of the "Devil's Grip," than to thread the mazes of the labyrinth of passages, galleries, and apartments, in which he found himself involved. He remembered, as he expressed it to himself, in a low soliloquy, "to have run into a narrow passage from the main channel, but whether he had sheered to the starboard or larboard hand" was a material fact that had entirely escaped his memory. Tom was in that part of the building that Colonel Howard had designated as the "cloisters," and in which, luckily for him, he was but little liable to encounter any foe, the room occupied by Borroughcliffe being the only one in the entire wing that was not exclusively devoted to the service of the ladies. The circumstance of the soldiers being permitted to invade this sanctuary was owing to the necessity, on the part of Colonel Howard, of placing either Griffith, Manual, or the recruiting-officer, in the vicinity of his wards, or of subjecting his prisoners to a treatment that the veteran would have thought unworthy of his name and character. This recent change in the quarters of Borroughcliffe operated doubly to the advantage of Tom, by lessening the chance of the speedy release of his uneasy captive, as well as by diminishing his own danger. Of the former circumstance he was, however, not aware; and the consideration of the latter was a sort of reflection to which the cockswain was, in no degree, addicted.

Following, necessarily, the line of the wall, he soon emerged from the dark and narrow passage in which he had first found himself, and entered the principal gallery, that communicated with all the lower apartments of that wing, as well as with the main body of the edifice. An open door, through which a strong light was glaring, at a distant end of this gallery, instantly caught his eye, and the old seaman had not advanced many steps toward it before he discovered that he was approaching the very room which had so much excited his curiosity, and by the identical passage through which he had entered the Abbey. To turn and retrace his steps was the most obvious course for any man to take who felt anxious to escape; but the sounds of high conviviality bursting from the cheerful apartment, among which the cockswain thought he distinguished the name of Griffith, determined Tom to advance and reconnoiter the scene more closely. The reader will anticipate that when he paused in the shadow, the doubting old seaman stood once more near the threshold which he had so lately crossed, when conducted to the room of Borroughcliffe. The seat of that gentleman was now occupied by Dillon, and Colonel Howard had resumed his wonted station at the foot of the table. The noise was chiefly made by the latter, who had evidently been enjoying a more minute relation of the means by which his kinsman had entrapped his unwary enemy.

"A nice *ruse!*" cried the veteran, as Tom assumed his post, in ambush—"a most noble and ingenious *ruse*, and such a one as would have baffled Cæsar! He must have been a cunning dog, that Cæsar; but I do think, Kit, you would have been too much for him; hang me if I don't think you would have puzzled Wolfe himself, had you held Quebec, in-

stead of Montcalm! Ah, boy! we want you in the colonies, with the ermine over your shoulders; such men as you, cousin Christopher, are sadly, sadly wanted there to defend his majesty's rights."

"Indeed, dear sir, your partiality gives me credit for qualities I do not possess," said Dillon, dropping his eyes, perhaps with a feeling of conscious unworthiness, but with an air of much humility; "the little justifiable artifice——"

"Ay! there lies the beauty of the transaction," interrupted the colonel, shoving the bottle from him, with the free, open air of a man who never harbored disguise; "you told no lie; no mean deception, that any dog, however base and unworthy, might invent; but you practiced a neat, a military, a—a—yes, a classical deception, on your enemy; a classical deception, that is the very term for it; such a deception as Pompey, or Mark Antony, or—or—you know those old fellows' names, better than I do, Kit; but name the cleverest fellow that ever lived in Greece, or Rome, and I shall say he is a dunce compared to you. 'Twas a real Spartan trick, both simple and honest."

It was extremely fortunate for Dillon that the animation of his aged kinsman kept his head and body in such constant motion, during this apostrophe, as to intercept the aim that the cockswain was deliberately taking at his head with one of Borroughcliffe's pistols; and perhaps the sense of shame which induced him to sink his face on his hands, was another means of saving his life, by giving the indignant old seaman time for reflection.

"But you have not spoken of the ladies," said Dillon, after a moment's pause; "I should hope they have borne the alarm of the day like kinswomen of the family of Howard."

The colonel glanced his eyes around him, as if to assure himself they were alone, and dropped his voice, as he answered:

"Ah, Kit! they have come to, since this rebel scoundrel, Griffith, has been brought into the Abbey; we were favored with the company of even Miss Howard, in the dining-room, to-day. There was a good deal of 'dear uncleing,' and 'fears that my life might be exposed by the quarrels and skirmishes of these desperadoes who have landed;' as if an old fellow, who served through the whole war, from '56 to '63, was afraid to let his nose smell gunpowder any more than if it were snuff! But it will be a hard matter to wheedle an old soldier out of his allegiance! This Griffith goes to the Tower, at least, Mr. Dillon."

"It would be advisable to commit his person to the civil authority, without delay."

"To the constable of the Tower, the Earl Cornwallis, a good and loyal nobleman, who is, at this moment, fighting the rebels in my own native province, Christopher," interrupted the colonel; "that will be what I call retributive justice; but," continued the veteran, rising with an air of gentlemanly dignity, "it will not do to permit even the constable of the Tower of London to surpass the master of St. Ruth in hospitality and kindness to his prisoners. I have ordered suitable refreshments to their apartments, and it is incumbent on me to see that my commands have been properly obeyed. Arrangements must also be made for the reception of this Captain Barnstable, who will doubtless soon be here."

"Within the hour, at farthest," said Dillon, looking uneasily at his watch.

"We must be stirring, boy," continued the colonel, moving toward the door that led to the apartments of his prisoners; "but there is a courtesy due to the ladies, as well as to those unfortunate violators of the laws—go, Christopher, convey my kindest wishes to Cecilia; she don't deserve them, the obstinate vixen, but then she is my brother Harry's child! and while there, you arch dog, plead your own cause. Mark Antony was a fool to you at a *ruse*, and yet Mark was one of your successful suitors, too; there was that Queen of the Pyramids——"

The door closed on the excited veteran, at these words, and Dillon was left standing by himself, at the side of the table, musing, as if in doubt whether to venture

on the step that his kinsman had proposed, or not.

The greater part of the preceding discourse was unintelligible to the cockswain, who had waited its termination with extraordinary patience, in hopes he might obtain some information that he could render of service to the captives. Before he had time to decide on what was now best for him to do, Dillon suddenly determined to venture himself in the cloisters; and, swallowing a couple of glasses of wine in a breath, he passed the hesitating cockswain, who was concealed by the opening door, so closely as to brush his person, and moved down the gallery with those rapid strides which men who act under the impulse of forced resolutions are very apt to assume, as if to conceal their weakness from themselves. Tom hesitated no longer; but aiding the impulse given to the door by Dillon, as he passed, so as to darken the passage, he followed the sounds of the other's footsteps, while he trod, in the manner already described, the stone pavement of the gallery. Dillon paused an instant at the turning that led to the room of Borroughcliffe, but whether irresolute which way to urge his steps, or listening to the incautious and heavy tread of the cockswain, is not known; if the latter, he mistook them for the echoes of his own footsteps, and moved forward again without making any discovery.

The light tap which Dillon gave on the door of the withdrawing-room of the cloisters, was answered by the soft voice of Cecilia Howard herself, who bade the applicant enter. There was a slight confusion evident in the manner of the gentleman as he complied with the bidding, and, in its hesitancy, the door was for an instant neglected.

"I come, Miss Howard," said Dillon, "by the commands of your uncle, and, permit me to add, by my own——"

"May Heaven shield us!" exclaimed Cecilia, clasping her hands in affright, and rising involuntarily from her couch, "are we, too, to be imprisoned and murdered?"

"Surely Miss Howard will not impute to me—" Dillon paused, observing that the wild looks, not only of Cecilia, but of Katherine and Alice Dunscombe, also, were directed at some other object, and, turning, to his manifest terror be beheld the gigantic frame of the cockswain, surmounted by an iron visage fixed in settled hostility, in possession of the only passage from the apartment.

"If there's murder to be done," said Tom, after surveying the astonished group with a stern eye, "it's as likely this here liar will be the one to do it as another; but you have nothing to fear from a man who has followed the seas too long, and has grappled with too many monsters, both flesh and fish, not to know how to treat a helpless woman. None, who know him, will say that Thomas Coffin ever used uncivil language, or unseaman-like conduct, to any of his mother's kind."

"Coffin!" exclaimed Katherine, advancing with a more confident air from the corner into which terror had driven her with her companions.

"Ay, Coffin," continued the old sailor, his grim features gradually relaxing, as he gazed on her bright looks; "'tis a solemn word, but it's a word that passes over the shoals, among the islands, and along the cape, oftener than any other. My father was a Coffin, and my mother was a Joy; and the two names can count more flukes than all the rest in the island together; though the Worths, and the Garners, and the Swaines, dart better harpoons, and set truer lances, than any men who come from the weather-side of the Atlantic."

Katherine listened to this digression in honor of the whalers of Nantucket with marked complacency, and, when he concluded, she repeated, slowly:

"Coffin! this, then, is Long Tom?"

"Ay, ay, Long Tom, and no sham in the name, either," returned the cockswain, suffering the stern indignation that had lowered around his hard visage to relax into a low laugh as he gazed on her animated features; "the Lord bless your smiling face and bright black eyes, young madam! you have heard of old Long Tom, then? most likely, 'twas something about the blow he strikes at the fish—eh! I'm old, and I'm stiff, now, young

madam, but, afore I was nineteen, I stood at the head of the dance, at a ball on the cape, and that with a partner almost as handsome as yourself—ay! and this was after I had three broad flukes logged against my name."

"No," said Katherine, advancing in her eagerness a step or two nigher to the old tar, her cheeks flushing while she spoke, "I have heard of you as an instructor in a seaman's duty, as the faithful cockswain, nay, I may say, as the devoted companion and friend of Mr. Richard Barnstable—but, perhaps, you came now as the bearer of some message or letter from that gentleman."

The sound of his commander's name suddenly revived the recollection of Coffin, and with it all the fierce sternness of his manner returned. Bending his eyes keenly on the cowering form of Dillon, he said—in those deep, harsh tones, that seem peculiar to men who have braved the elements, until they appear to have imbibed some of their roughest qualities:

"Liar! how now? What brought old Tom Coffin into these shoals and narrow channels? was it a letter? ha! but by the Lord that maketh the winds to blow, and teacheth the lost mariner how to steer over the wide waters, you shall sleep this night, villain, on the planks of the *Ariel;* and if it be the will of God that beautiful piece of handicraft is to sink at her mooring like a worthless hulk, ye shall still sleep in her: ay, and a sleep that shall not end till they call all hands to foot up the day's work of this life, at the close of man's longest voyage."

The extraordinary vehemence, the language, the attitude of the old seaman, commanding in its energy, and the honest indignation that shone in every look of his keen eyes, together with the nature of the address and its paralyzing effect on Dillon, who quailed before it like the stricken deer, united to keep the female listeners, for many moments, silent through amazement. During this brief period, Tom advanced upon his nerveless victim, and, lashing his arms together behind his back, he fastened him by a strong cord, to the broad canvas belt that he constantly wore around his own body, leaving to himself, by this arrangement, the free use of his arms and weapons of offense, while he secured his captive.

"Surely," said Cecilia, recovering her recollection the first of the astonished group, "Mr. Barnstable has not commissioned you to offer this violence to my uncle's kinsman, under the roof of Colonel Howard?—Miss Plowden, your friend has strangely forgotten himself in this transaction, if this man acts in obedience to his order!"

"My friend, my cousin Howard," returned Katherine, "would never commission his cockswain, or any one, to do an unworthy deed. Speak, honest sailor; why do you commit this outrage on the worthy Mr. Dillon, Colonel Howard's kinsman, and a cupboard cousin of St. Ruth's Abbey?"

"Nay, Katherine——"

"Nay, Cecilia, be patient, and let the stranger have utterance; he may solve the difficulty altogether."

The cockswain, understanding that an explanation was expected from his lips, addressed himself to the task with an energy suitable both to the subject and to his own feelings. In a very few words, though a little obscured by his peculiar diction, he made his listeners understand the confidence that Barnstable had reposed in Dillon, and the treachery of the latter. They heard him with increased astonishment, and Cecilia hardly allowed him time to conclude, before she exclaimed:

"And did Colonel Howard, could Colonel Howard listen to this treacherous project?"

"Ay, they spliced it together among them," returned Tom; "though one part of this cruise will turn out but badly."

"Even Borroughcliffe, cold and hardened as he appears to be by habit, would spurn at such dishonor," added Miss Howard.

"But, Mr. Barnstable," at length Katherine succeeded in saying, when her feelings permitted her utterance, "said you not, that the soldiers were in quest of him?"

"Ay, ay, young madam," the cockswain replied, smiling with grim ferocity, "they are in chase, but he has shifted his anchorage, and, even if they should find him, his long pikes would make short work of a dozen red-coats. The Lord of tempests and calms have mercy, though, on the schooner! Ah, young madam, she is as lovely to the eyes of an old seafaring man as any of your kind can be to human nature!"

"But why this delay?—away then, honest Tom, and reveal the treachery to your commander; you may not yet be too late—why delay a moment?"

"The ship tarries for want of a pilot—I could carry three fathoms over the shoals of Nantucket the darkest night that ever shut the windows of heaven, but I should be likely to run upon breakers in this navigation. As it was, I was near getting into company that I should have had to fight my way out of."

"If that be all, follow me," cried the ardent Katherine; "I will conduct you to a path that leads to the ocean, without approaching the sentinels."

Until this moment, Dillon had entertained a secret expectation of a rescue, but when he heard this proposal, he felt his blood retreating to his heart from every part of his agitated frame, and his last hope seemed wrested from him. Raising himself from the abject, shrinking attitude, in which both shame and dread had conspired to keep him as though he had been fettered to the spot, he approached Cecilia, and cried in tones of horror:

"Do not, do not consent, Miss Howard, to abandon me to the fury of this man! Your uncle, your honorable uncle, even now applauded and united with me in my enterprise, which is no more than a common artifice in war."

"My uncle would unite, Mr. Dillon, in no project of deliberate treachery like this," said Cecilia, coldly.

"He did, I swear by——"

"Liar!" interrupted the deep tones of the cockswain.

Dillon shivered with agony and terror, while the sounds of this appalling voice sunk into his inmost soul; but as the gloom of the night, the secret ravines of the cliffs, and the turbulence of the ocean, flashed across his imagination, he again yielded to a dread of the horrors to which he should be exposed, in encountering them at the mercy of his most powerful enemy, and he continued his solicitations:

"Hear me, once more hear me—Miss Howard, I beseech you, hear me! Am I not of your own blood and country? Will you see me abandoned to the wild, merciless, malignant fury of this man, who will transfix me with that—O God! if you had but seen the sight I beheld in the *Alacrity*!—hear me, Miss Howard; for the love you bear your Maker, intercede for me! Mr. Griffith shall be released——"

"Liar!" again interrupted the cockswain.

"What promises he?" asked Cecilia, turning her averted face once more at the miserable captive.

"Nothing at all that will be fulfilled," said Katherine.—"Follow, honest Tom, and I, at least, will conduct you in good faith."

"Cruel, obdurate Miss Plowden; gentle, kind Miss Alice, you will not refuse to raise your voice in my favor; your heart is not hardened by any imaginary dangers to those you love."

"Nay, address me not," said Alice, bending her meek eyes to the floor; "I trust your life is in no danger; and I pray that he who has the power, will have the mercy, to see you unharmed."

"Away!" said Tom, grasping the collar of the helpless Dillon, and rather carrying than leading him into the gallery; "if a sound, one quarter as loud as a young porpoise makes when he draws his first breath, comes from you, villain, you shall see the sight of the *Alacrity* over again. My harpoon keeps its edge well, and the old arm can yet drive it to the seizing."

This menace effectually silenced even the hard, perturbed breathings of the captive, who, with his conductor, followed the light steps of Katherine through some of the secret mazes of the building, until, in a few minutes, they issued through a small

door into the open air. Without pausing to deliberate, Miss Plowden led the cockswain through the grounds to a different wicket from the one by which he had entered the paddock, and pointing to the path, which might be dimly traced along the faded herbage, she bade God bless him, in a voice that discovered her interest in his safety, and vanished from his sight like an aërial being.

Tom needed no incentive to his speed, now that the course lay so plainly before him, but loosening his pistols in his belt, and poising his harpoon, he crossed the fields at a gait that compelled his companion to exert his utmost powers, in the way of walking, to equal. Once or twice Dillon ventured to utter a word or two; but the stern "Silence" from the cockswain warned him to cease, until, perceiving that they were approaching the cliffs, he made a final effort to obtain his liberty, by hurriedly promising a large bribe. The cockswain made no reply, and the captive was secretly hoping that his scheme was producing its wonted effect, when he unexpectedly felt the keen, cold edge of the barbed iron of the harpoon pressing against his breast, through the opening of his ruffles, and even razing the skin.

"Liar!" said Tom; "another word, and I'll drive it through your heart!"

From that moment, Dillon was as silent as the grave. They reached the edge of the cliffs, without encountering the party that had been sent in quest of Barnstable, at a point near where they had landed. The old seaman paused an instant on the verge of the precipice, and cast his experienced eyes along the wide expanse of water that lay before him. The sea was no longer sleeping, but already in heavy motion, and rolling its surly waves against the base of the rocks on which he stood, scattering their white crests high in foam. The cockswain, after bending his looks along the whole line of the eastern horizon, gave utterance to a low and stifled groan; and then, striking the staff of his harpoon violently against the earth, he pursued his way along the very edge of the cliffs, muttering certain dreadful denunciations, which the conscience of his appalled listener did not fail to apply to himself. It appeared to the latter that his angry and excited leader sought the giddy verge of the precipice with a sort of wanton recklessness, so daring were the steps that he took along its brow, notwithstanding the darkness of the hour, and the violence of the blasts that occasionally rushed upon them, leaving behind a kind of reaction, that more than once brought the life of the manacled captive in imminent jeopardy. But it would seem the wary cockswain had a motive for this apparently inconsiderate desperation. When they had made good quite half the distance between the point where Barnstable had landed and that where he had appointed to meet his cockswain, the sounds of voices were brought indistinctly to their ears, in one of the momentary pauses of the rushing winds, and caused the cockswain to make a dead stand in his progress. He listened intently for a single minute, when his resolution appeared to be taken. He turned to Dillon and spoke; though his voice was suppressed and low, it was deep and resolute:

"One word, or you die; over the cliffs! You must take a seaman's ladder: there is footing on the rocks, and crags for your hands. Over the cliffs, I bid ye, or I'll cast ye into the sea, as I would a dead enemy!"

"Mercy, mercy!" implored Dillon; "I could not do it in the day; by this light I shall surely perish."

"Over ye go!" said Tom, "or——"

Dillon waited for no more, but descended, with trembling steps, the dangerous precipice that lay before him. He was followed by the cockswain, with a haste that unavoidably dislodged his captive from the trembling stand he had taken on the shelf of a rock, who, to his increased horror, found himself dangling in the air, his body impending over the sullen surf, that was tumbling in with violence upon the rocks beneath him. An involuntary shriek burst from Dillon, as he felt his person thrust from the narrow shelf; and his cry sounded amid the tempest like the screeching of the spirit of the storm.

"Another such a call, and I cut your

tow-line, villain," exclaimed the determined seaman, "when nothing short of eternity will bring you up!"

The sounds of footsteps and voices were now distinctly audible, and presently a party of armed men appeared on the edges of the rocks directly above them.

"It was a human voice," said one of them, "and like a man in distress."

"It cannot be the men we are sent in search of," returned Sergeant Drill; "for no watchword that I ever heard sounded like that cry."

"They say that such cries are often heard in the storms along the coast," said a voice that was uttered with less of military confidence than the two others; "and they are thought to come from drowned seamen."

A feeble laugh arose among the listeners and one or two forced jokes were made at the expense of their superstitious comrade; but the scene did not fail to produce its effects on even the most sturdy among the unbelievers in the marvelous; for, after a few more similar remarks, the whole party retired from the cliffs, at a pace that might have been accelerated by the nature of their discourse. The cockswain, who had stood all this time, firm as the rock which supported him, bearing up not only his own weight, but the person of Dillon also, raised his head above the brow of the precipice, as they withdrew, to reconnoiter, and then, drawing up the nearly insensible captive, and placing him in safety on the bank, he followed himself. Not a moment was wasted in unnecessary explanation, but Dillon found himself again urged forward, with the same velocity as before. In a few minutes they gained the desired ravine, down which Tom plunged with a seaman's nerve, dragging his prisoner after him, and directly they stood where the waves rose to their feet, as they flowed far and foaming across the sands. The cockswain stooped so low as to bring the crest of the billows in a line with the horizon, when he discovered the dark boat playing in the outer edge of the surf.

"What hoa! Ariels there!" shouted Tom, in a voice that the growing tempest carried to the ears of the retreating soldiers, who quickened their footsteps, as they listened to sounds which their fears taught them to believe supernatural.

"Who hails?" cried the well-known voice of Barnstable.

"Once your master, now your servant," answered the cockswain, with a watchword of his own invention.

"'Tis he," returned the lieutenant; "veer away, boys, veer away. You must wade into the surf."

Tom caught Dillon in his arms, and throwing him like a cork across his shoulder, he dashed into the streak of foam that was bearing the boat on its crest, and before his companion had time for remonstrance or entreaty, he found himself once more by the side of Barnstable.

"Who have we here?" asked the lieutenant; "this is not Griffith!"

"Haul out and weigh your grapnel," said the excited cockswain; "and then, boys, if you love the *Ariel*, pull while the life and the will is left in you."

Barnstable knew his man, and not another question was asked, until the boat was without the breakers, now skimming the rounded summits of the waves, or settling into the hollows of the sea, but always cutting the water asunder, as she urged her course, with amazing velocity, toward the haven where the schooner had been left at anchor. Then, in a few bitter sentences, the cockswain explained to his commander the treachery of Dillon and the danger of the schooner.

"The soldiers are slow at a night-muster," Tom concluded; "and from what I overheard, the express will have to make a crooked course to double the head of the bay, so that, but for this northeaster, we might weather upon them yet; but it's a matter that lies altogether in the will of Providence.—Pull, my hearties, pull—everything depends on your oars to-night."

Barnstable listened in deep silence to this unexpected narration, which sounded in the ears of Dillon like his funeral-knell. At length, the suppressed voice of the lieutenant was heard also, uttering:

"Wretch! if I should cast you into the sea, as food for the fishes, who could

blame me? But if my schooner goes to the bottom, she shall prove your coffin!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed."
—TEMPEST.

THE arms of Dillon were released from their confinement by the cockswain, as a measure of humane caution against accidents, when they entered the surf; and the captive now availed himself of the circumstance to bury his features in the folds of his attire, when he brooded over the events of the last few hours with that mixture of malignant passion and pusillanimous dread of the future that formed the chief ingredients in his character. From this state of apparent quietude neither Barnstable nor Tom seemed disposed to rouse him by their remarks, for both were too much engaged with their own gloomy forebodings, to indulge in any unnecessary words. An occasional ejaculation from the former, as if to propitiate the spirit of the storm, as he gazed on the troubled appearance of the elements, or a cheering cry from the latter to animate his crew, alone was heard amid the sullen roaring of the waters, and the mournful whistling of the winds that swept heavily across the broad waste of the German Ocean. There might have been an hour consumed thus, in a vigorous struggle between the seamen and the growing billows, when the boat doubled the northern headland of the desired haven, and shot at once from its boisterous passage along the margin of the breakers into the placid waters of the sequestered bay. The passing blasts were still heard rushing above the highlands that surrounded, and, in fact, formed the estuary; but the profound stillness of deep night pervaded the secret recesses along the unruffled surface of its waters. The shadows of the hills seemed to have accumulated, like a mass of gloom, in the center of the basin, and though every eye involuntarily turned to search, it was in vain that the anxious seamen endeavored to discover their little vessel through its density. While the boat glided into this quiet scene, Barnstable anxiously observed:

"Everything is as still as death."

"God send it is not the stillness of death!" ejaculated the cockswain. "Here, here," he continued speaking in a lower tone as if fearful of being overheard, "here she lies, sir, more to port; look into the streak of clear sky above the marsh, on the starboard hand of the wood, there; that long black line is her main-topmast; I know it by the rake; and there is her night-pennant fluttering above that bright star, ay, ay, sir, there go our own stars aloft yet, dancing among the stars in the heavens! God bless her! God bless her! she rides as easy and as quiet as a gull asleep!"

"I believe all in her sleep too," returned his commander. "Ha! by Heaven, we have arrived in good time; the soldiers are moving."

The quick eye of Barnstable had detected the glimmering of passing lanterns, as they flitted across the embrasures of the battery, and at the next moment the guarded but distinct sounds of an active bustle on the decks of the schooner were plainly audible. The lieutenant was rubbing his hands together with a sort of ecstacy that probably will not be understood by the great majority of our readers, while Long Tom was actually indulging in a paroxysm of his low, spiritless laughter, as these certain intimations of the safety of the *Ariel* and of the vigilance of her crew were conveyed to their ears; when the whole hull and taper spars of their floating home became unexpectedly visible, and the sky, the placid basin, and the adjacent hills were illuminated by a flash as sudden and as vivid as the keenest lightning. Both Barnstable and his cockswain seemed instinctively to strain their eyes toward the schooner with an effort to surpass human vision; but ere the rolling reverberations of the report of a heavy piece of ordnance from the heights had commenced, the dull whistling rush of the shot swept over their heads like the moaning of a hurricane, and was succeeded by the plash of the waters,

which was followed, in a breath, by the rattling of the mass of iron, as it bounded with violent fury from rock to rock, shivering and tearing the fragments that lined the margin of the bay.

"A bad aim with the first gun generally leaves your enemy clean decks," said the cockswain, with his deliberate sort of philosophy; "smoke makes but dim spectacles; besides, the night always grows darkest as you call off the morning watch."

"That boy is a miracle for his years!" rejoined the delighted lieutenant. "See, Tom, the yonker has shifted his berth in the dark, and the Englishmen have fired by the day-range they must have taken, for we left him in a direct line between the battery and yon hammock! What would have become of us if that heavy fellow had plunged upon our decks and gone out below the water-line?"

"We should have sunk into English mud, for eternity, as sure as our metal and kentledge would have taken us down," responded Tom; "such a point-blanker would have torn off a streak of our wales, out-board, and not even left the marines time so say a prayer!—Tend bow there!"

It is not to be supposed that the crew of the whale-boat continued idle during this interchange of opinions between the lieutenant and his cockswain: on the contrary, the sight of their vessel acted on them like a charm, and, believing that all necessity for caution was now over, they had expended their utmost strength in efforts that had already brought them, as the last words of Tom indicated, to the side of the *Ariel*. Though every nerve of Barnstable was thrilling with the excitement produced by his feelings passing from a state of the most doubtful apprehension to that of a revived and almost confident hope of effecting his escape, he assumed the command of his vessel with all that stern but calm authority that seamen find it most necessary to exert in the moment of extremest danger.

Any one of the heavy shot that their enemies continued to hurl from their heights into the darkness of the haven he well knew must prove fatal to them, as it would, unavoidably, pass through the slight fabric of the *Ariel*, and open a passage to the water that no means he possessed could remedy. His mandates were, therefore, issued with a full perception of the critical nature of the emergency, but with that collectedness of manner, and intonation of voice, that were best adapted to enforce a ready and animated obedience. Under this impulse the crew of the schooner soon got their anchor freed from the bottom, and, seizing their sweeps, they forced her by their united efforts directly in the face of the battery, under that shore whose summit was now crowned with a canopy of smoke, that every discharge of the ordnance tinged with dim colors, like the faintest tints that are reflected from the clouds toward a setting sun. So long as the seamen were enabled to keep their little bark under the cover of the hill, they were, of course, safe; but Barnstable perceived, as they emerged from its shadow, and were drawing nigh the passage which led into the ocean, that the action of his sweeps would no longer avail them against the currents of air they encountered; neither would the darkness conceal their movements from his enemy, who had already employed men on the shore to discern the position of the schooner. Throwing off at once, therefore, all appearance of disguise, he gave forth the word to spread the canvas of his vessel, in his ordinary cheerful manner.

"Let them do their worst now, Merry," he added; "we have brought them to a distance that I think will keep their iron above water, and we have no dodge about us, yonker!"

"It must be keener marksmen than the militia, or volunteers, or fencibles, or whatever they call themselves, behind yon grass-bank, to frighten the saucy *Ariel* from the wind," returned the reckless boy; "but why have you brought Jonah aboard us again, sir? Look at him by the light of the cabin lamp, he winks at every gun, as if he expected the shot would hull his own ugly yellow physiognomy. And what tidings have we, sir, from Mr. Griffith and the marine?"

"Name him not," said Barnstable, pressing the shoulder on which he lightly leaned with a convulsive grasp that caused the boy to yield with pain—"name him not, Merry; I want my temper and my faculties at this moment undisturbed, and thinking of the wretch unfits me for my duty. But there will come a time!—go forward, sir; we feel the wind, and have a narrow passage to work through."

The boy obeyed a mandate which was given in the usual prompt manner of their profession, and which, he well understood, was intended to intimate that the distance which years and rank had created between them, but which Barnstable often chose to forget while communing with Merry, was now to be resumed. The sails had been loosened and set; and, as the vessel approached the throat of the passage, the gale, which was blowing with increasing violence, began to make a very sensible impression on the light bark. The cockswain, who, in the absence of most of the inferior officers, had been acting, on the forecastle, the part of one who felt, from his years and experience, that he had some right to advise, if not to command, at such a juncture, now walked to the station which his commander had taken, near the helmsman, as if willing to place himself in the way of being seen.

"Well, Master Coffin," said Barnstable, who well understood the propensity his old shipmate had to commune with him on all important occasions, "what think you of the cruise now? Those gentlemen on the hill make a great noise, but I have lost even the whistling of their shot; one would think they could see our sails against the broad band of light which is opening to seaward."

"Ay, ay, sir, they see us and mean to hit us too; but we are running across their fire, and that with a ten-knot breeze; but, when we heave in stays, and get in a line with their guns, we shall see, and it may be feel, more of their work than we do now; a thirty-two a'n't trained as easily as a fowling-piece or a ducking-gun."

Barnstable was struck with the truth of this observation; but as there existed an immediate necessity for placing the schooner in the very situation to which the other alluded, he gave his orders at once, and the vessel came about, and ran with her head pointing toward the sea, in as short a time as we have taken to record it.

"There, they have us now, or never," cried the lieutenant, when the evolution was completed. "If we fetch to windward off the northern point, we shall lay out into the offing, and in ten minutes we might laugh at Queen Anne's pocket-piece, which, you know, old boy, sent a ball from Dover to Calais."

"Ay, sir, I've heard of the gun," returned the grave seaman, "and a lively piece it must have been, if the straits were always of the same width they are now. But I see that, Captain Barnstable, which is more dangerous than a dozen of the heaviest cannon that were ever cast can be, at half a league's distance. The water is bubbling through our lee scuppers already, sir."

"And what of that? haven't I buried her guns often, and yet kept every spar in her without crack or splinter?"

"Ay, ay, sir, you have done it, and can do it again, where there is sea-room, which is all that a man wants for comfort in this life. But when we are out of these chops, we shall be embayed, with a heavy northeaster setting dead into the bight; it is that which I fear, Captain Barnstable, more than all the powder and ball in the whole island."

"And yet, Tom, the balls are not to be despised, either; those fellows have found out their range, and send their iron within hail again; we walk pretty fast, Mr. Coffin, but a thirty-two can out-travel us, with the best wind that ever blew."

Tom threw a cursory glance toward the battery, which had renewed its fire with a spirit that denoted they saw their object, as he answered:

"It is never worth a man's while to strive to dodge a shot; for they are all commissioned to do their work, the same as a ship is commissioned to cruise in certain latitudes; but for the winds and

the weather, they are given for a seafaring man to guard against, by making or shortening sail, as the case may be. Now, the headland to the southward stretches full three leagues to windward and the shoals lie to the north; among which God keep us from ever running this craft again!"

"We will beat her out of the bight, old fellow," cried the lieutenant; "we shall have a leg of three leagues in length to do it in."

"I have known longer legs too short," returned the cockswain, shaking his head; "a tumbling sea, with a lee-tide, on a lee-shore, makes a sad lee-way."

The lieutenant was in the act of replying to this saying with a cheerful laugh, when the whistling of a passing shot was instantly succeeded by a crash of splintered wood; and at the next moment the head of the mainmast, after tottering for an instant in the gale, fell toward the deck, bringing with it the mainsail, and the long line of topmast that had been bearing the emblems of America, as the cockswain had expressed it, among the stars of the heavens.

"That was a most unlucky hit!" Barnstable suffered to escape him in the concern of the moment; but, instantly resuming all his collectedness of manner and voice, he gave his orders to clear the wreck and secure the fluttering canvas.

The mournful forebodings of Tom seemed to vanish with the appearance of a necessity for his exertions, and he was foremost among the crew in executing the orders of their commander. The loss of all the sail on the mainmast forced the *Ariel* so much from her course as to render it difficult to weather the point that jutted, under her lee, for some distance into the ocean. This desirable object was, however, effected by the skill of Barnstable, aided by the excellent properties of his vessel; and the schooner, borne down by the power of the gale, from whose fury she had now no protection, passed heavily along the land, heading, as far as possible, from the breakers, while the seamen were engaged in making their preparations to display as much of their main-sail as the stump of the mast would allow them to spread. The firing from the battery ceased as the *Ariel* rounded the little promontory; but Barnstable, whose gaze was now bent intently on the ocean, soon perceived that, as his cockswain had predicted, he had a much more threatening danger to encounter in the elements. When their damages were repaired, so far as circumstances would permit, the cockswain returned to his wonted station near the lieutenant; and after a momentary pause, during which his eyes roved over the rigging with a seaman's scrutiny, he resumed the discourse.

"It would have been better for us that the best man in the schooner should have been dubbed of a limb by that shot, than that the *Ariel* should have lost her best leg; a mainsail close-reefed may be prudent canvas as the wind blows, but it holds a poor luff to keep a craft to windward."

"What would you have, Tom Coffin?" retorted his commander. "You see she draws ahead, and off-shore; do you expect a vessel to fly in the very teeth of the gale? or would you have me wear and beach her at once?"

"I would have nothing, nothing, Captain Barnstable," returned the old seaman, sensibly touched at his commander's displeasure; "you are as able as any man that ever trod a plank to work her into an offing; but, sir, when that soldier officer told me of the scheme to sink the *Ariel* at her anchor, there was such feelings come athwart my philosophy as never crossed it afore. I thought I saw her a wrack, as plainly, ay, as plainly as you may see the stump of that mast; and I will own it, for it's as natural to love the craft you sail in as it is to love one's self, I will own that my manhood fetched a heavy lee-lurch at the sight."

"Away with ye, ye old sea-croaker! forward with ye, and see that the head-sheets are trimmed flat. But hold! come hither, Tom; if you have sights of wrecks, and sharks, and other beautiful objects, keep them stowed in your own silly brain; don't make a ghost-parlor of my forecastle. The lads begin to look to leeward, now, oftener than I would have them.

Go, sirrah, go, and take example from Mr. Merry, who is seated on your namesake there, and is singing as if he were a chorister in his father's church."

"Ah, Captain Barnstable, Mr. Merry is a boy, and knows nothing, so fears nothing. But I shall obey your orders, sir; and if the men fall astarn this gale, it sha'n't be for anything they'll hear from old Tom Coffin."

The cockswain lingered a moment, notwithstanding his promised obedience, and then ventured to request that——

"Captain Barnstable would please call Mr. Merry from the gun; for I know, from having followed the seas my natural life, that singing in a gale is sure to bring the wind down upon a vessel the heavier; for He who rules the tempests is displeased that man's voice shall be heard when He chooses to send His own breath on the water."

Barnstable was at a loss whether to laugh at his cockswain's infirmity, or to yield to the impression which his earnest and solemn manner had a powerful tendency to produce amid such a scene. But, making an effort to shake off the superstitious awe that he felt creeping around his own heart, the lieutenant relieved the mind of the worthy old seaman so far as to call the careless boy from his perch to his own side; where respect for the sacred character of the quarter-deck instantly put an end to the lively air he had been humming. Tom walked slowly forward, apparently much relieved by the reflection that he had effected so important an object.

The *Ariel* continued to struggle against the winds and ocean for several hours longer before the day broke on the tempestuous scene, and the anxious mariners were enabled to form a more accurate estimate of their real danger. As the violence of the gale increased, the canvas of the schooner had been gradually reduced, until she was unable to show more than was absolutely necessary to prevent her driving helplessly on the land. Barnstable watched the appearance of the weather, as the light slowly opened upon them, with an intense anxiety, which denoted that the presentiments of the cockswain were no longer deemed idle. On looking to windward, he beheld the green masses of water that were rolling in toward the land, with a violence that seemed irresistible, crowned with ridges of foam; and there were moments when the air appeared filled with sparkling gems, as the rays of the rising sun fell upon the spray that was swept from wave to wave. Toward the land the view was still more appalling. The cliffs, but a short half league under the lee of the schooner, were, at all times, nearly hid from the eye by the pyramids of water, which the furious element, so suddenly restrained in its violence, cast high into the air, as if seeking to overlap the boundaries that Nature had fixed to its dominion. The whole coast, from the distant headland at the south to the well-known shoals that stretched far beyond their course in the opposite direction, displayed a broad belt of foam, into which it would have been certain destruction for the proudest ship that ever swam to enter. Still the *Ariel* floated on the billows lightly and in safety, though yielding to the impulses of the waters, and at times appearing to be engulfed in the yawning chasms which, apparently, opened beneath her to receive the little fabric. The low rumor of acknowledged danger had found its way through the schooner, and the seamen, after fastening their hopeless looks on the small spot of canvas that they were still able to show to the tempest, would turn to view the dreary line of coast that seemed to offer so gloomy an alternative. Even Dillon, to whom the report of their danger had found its way, crept from his place of concealment in the cabin, and moved about the decks unheeded, devouring, with greedy ears, such opinions as fell from the lips of the sullen mariners.

At this moment of appalling apprehension, the cockswain exhibited the calmest resignation. He knew all had been done that lay in the power of man to urge their little vessel from the land, and it was now too evident to his experienced eyes that it had been done in vain; but consid-

ering himself as a sort of fixture in the schooner, he was quite prepared to abide her fate, be it for better or for worse. The settled look of gloom that gathered around the frank brow of Barnstable was in no degree connected with any considerations of himself; but proceeded from that sort of parental responsibility from which the sea-commander is never exempt. The discipline of the crew, however, still continued perfect and unyielding. There had, it is true, been a slight movement made by one or two of the older seamen, which indicated an intention to drown the apprehensions of death in inebriety; but Barnstable had called for his pistols, in a tone that checked the procedure instantly, and, although the fatal weapons were, untouched by him, left to lie exposed on the capstan, where they had been placed by his servant, not another symptom of insubordination appeared among the devoted crew. There was even what, to a landsman, might seem an appalling affectation of attention to the most trifling duties of the vessel: and the men who, it should seem, ought to be devoting the brief moments of their existence to the mighty business of the hour, were constantly called to attend to the most trivial details of their profession. Ropes were coiled, and the slightest damages occasioned by the waves, which, at short intervals, swept across the low decks of the *Ariel*, were repaired, with the same precision and order as if she yet lay embayed in the haven from which she had just been driven. In this manner the arm of authority was kept extended over the silent crew, not with the vain desire to preserve a lingering though useless exercise of power, but with a view to maintain that unity of action that now could alone afford them even a ray of hope.

"She can make no head against this sea, under that rag of canvas," said Barnstable, gloomily, addressing the cockswain, who, with folded arms, and an air of cool resignation, was balancing his body on the verge of the quarter-deck, while the schooner was plunging madly into waves that nearly buried her in their bosom; "the poor little thing trembles like a frightened child, as she meets the water."

Tom sighed heavily, and shook his head, before he answered:

"If we could have kept the head of the mainmast an hour longer, we might have got an offing, and fetched to windward of the shoals; but as it is, sir, mortal man can't drive a craft to windward—she sets bodily into land, and will be in the breakers in less than an hour, unless God wills that the wind shall cease to blow."

"We have no hope left us but to anchor; our ground tackle may yet bring her up."

Tom turned to his commander, and replied, solemnly, and with that assurance of manner that long experience only can give a man in moments of great danger:

"If our sheet-cable was bent to our heaviest anchor, this sea would bring it home, though nothing but her launch was riding by it. A northeaster in the German Ocean must and will blow itself out; nor shall we get the crown of the gale until the sun falls over the land. Then indeed it may lull; for the winds do often seem to reverence the glory of the heavens too much to blow their might in its very face!"

"We must do our duty to ourselves and the country," returned Barnstable. "Go, get the two bowers spliced, and have a kedge bent to a hawser; we'll back our two anchors together, and veer to the better end of two hundred and forty fathoms; it may yet bring her up. See all clear there for anchoring, and cutting away the mast! we'll leave the wind nothing but a naked hull to whistle over."

"Ay, if there was nothing but the wind, we might yet live to see the sun sink behind them hills," said the cockswain; "but what hemp can stand the strain of a craft that is buried, half the time, to her foremast in the water?"

The order was, however, executed by the crew, with a sort of desperate submission to the will of their commander; and when the preparations were completed, the anchors and kedge were dropped to the bottom, and the instant that the *Ariel* tended to the wind, the ax was applied

to the little that was left of her long, raking masts. The crash of the falling spars, as they came, in succession, across the decks of the vessel, appeared to produce no sensation amid that scene of complicated danger; but the seamen proceeded in silence to their hopeless duty of clearing the wrecks.

Every eye followed the floating timbers, as the waves swept them away from the vessel, with a sort of feverish curiosity to witness the effect produced by their collision with those rocks that lay so fearfully near them; but long before the spars entered the wide border of foam, they were hid from view by the furious element in which they floated. It was now felt by the whole crew of the *Ariel* that their last means of safety had been adopted; and, at each desperate and headlong plunge the vessel took, into the bosom of the seas that rolled upon her forecastle, the anxious seamen thought that they could perceive the yielding of the iron that yet clung to the bottom, or could hear the violent surge of the parting strands of the cable, that still held them to their anchors. While the minds of the sailors were agitated with the faint hopes that had been excited by the movements of their schooner, Dillon had been permitted to wander about the deck unnoticed; his rolling eyes, hard breathing, and clinched hands, excited no observation among the men, whose thoughts were yet dwelling on the means of safety. But now, when with a sort of frenzied desperation he would follow the retiring waters along the decks, and venture his person nigh the group that had collected around and on the gun of the cockswain, glances of fierce or of sullen vengeance were cast at him, that conveyed threats of a nature that he was too much agitated to understand.

"If ye are tired of this world, though your time, like my own, is probably but short in it," said Tom to him, as he passed the cockswain in one of his turns, "you can go forward among the men; but if ye have need of the moments to foot up the reck'ning of your doing among men, afore ye're brought to face your Maker, and hear the log-book of Heaven, I would advise you to keep as nigh as possible to Captain Barnstable or myself."

"Will you promise to save me if the vessel is wrecked?" exclaimed Dillon, catching at the first sounds of friendly interest that had reached his ears since he had been recaptured. "Oh! if you will, I can secure your future ease, yes, wealth, for the remainder of your days!"

"Your promises have been too ill kept afore this, for the peace of your soul," returned the cockswain, without bitterness, though sternly; "but it is not in me to strike even a whale that is already spouting blood."

The intercessions of Dillon were interrupted by a dreadful cry, that arose among the men forward, and which sounded with increased horror, amid the roarings of the tempest. The schooner rose on the breast of a wave at the same instant, and, falling off with her broadside to the sea, she drove in toward the cliffs, like a bubble on the rapids of a cataract.

"Our ground-tackle has parted," said Tom, with his resigned patience of manner undisturbed; "she shall die as easy as man can make her!" While he yet spoke, he seized the tiller, and gave to the vessel such a direction as would be most likely to cause her to strike the rocks with her bows foremost.

There was for one moment an expression of exquisite anguish betrayed in the dark countenance of Barnstable; but at the next it passed away, and he spoke cheerfully to his men:

"Be steady, my lads, be calm: there is yet a hope of life for *you*—our light draught will let us run in close to the cliffs, and it is still falling water—see your boats clear, and be steady."

The crew of the whale-boat, aroused by this speech from a sort of stupor, sprang into their light vessel, which was quickly lowered into the sea, and kept riding on the foam, free from the sides of the schooner, by the powerful exertions of the men. The cry for the cockswain was earnest and repeated, but Tom shook his head, without replying, still grasping the tiller, and keeping his eyes steadily bent

on the chaos of waters into which they were driving. The launch, the largest boat of the two, was cut loose from the "gripes," and the bustle and exertions of the moment rendered the crew insensible to the horror of the scene that surrounded them. But the loud, hoarse call of the cockswain, to "look out—secure yourselves!" suspended even their efforts, and at that instant the *Ariel* settled, on a wave that melted from under her, heavily on the rocks. The shock was so violent as to throw all who disregarded the warning cry from their feet, and the universal quiver that pervaded the vessel was like the last shudder of animated nature. For a time long enough to breathe, the least experienced among the men supposed the danger to be past; but a wave of great height followed the one that had deserted them, and, raising the vessel again, threw her roughly still farther on the bed of rocks, and at the same time its crest broke over her quarter, sweeping the length of her decks with a fury that was almost resistless. The shuddering seamen beheld their loosened boat driven from their grasp and dashed against the base of the cliffs, where no fragment of her wreck could be traced at the receding of the waters. But the passing billows had thrown the vessel into a position which, in some measure, protected her decks from the violence of those that succeeded it.

"Go, my boys, go," said Barnstable, as the moment of dreadful uncertainty passed; "you have still the whale-boat, and she, at least, will take you nigh the shore. Go into her, my boys. God bless you, God bless you all! You have been faithful and honest fellows, and I believe He will not desert you; go, my friends, while there is a lull."

The seamen threw themselves, in a mass, into the light vessel, which nearly sank under the unusual burden; but when they looked around them, Barnstable and Merry, Dillon and the cockswain, were yet to be seen on the decks of the *Ariel*. The former was pacing, in deep and perhaps bitter melancholy, the wet planks of the schooner, while the boy hung, unheeded, on his arm, uttering disregarded petitions to his commander to desert the wreck. Dillon approached the side where the boat lay, again and again, but the threatening countenances of the seamen as often drove him back in despair. Tom had seated himself on the heel of the bowsprit, where he continued, in an attitude of quiet resignation, returning no other answers to the loud and repeated calls of his shipmates, than by waving his hand toward the shore.

"Now hear me," said the boy, urging his request to tears; "if not for my sake, or for your own sake, Mr. Barnstable, or for the hope of God's mercy, go into the boat, for the love of my cousin Katherine."

The young lieutenant paused in his troubled walk, and for a moment he cast a glance of hesitation at the cliffs; but at the next instant his eyes fell on the ruin of his vessel, and he answered:

"Never, boy, never; if my hour has come, I will not shrink from my fate."

"Listen to the men, dear sir; the boat will be swamped, alongside the wreck, and their cry is, that without you they will not let her go."

Barnstable motioned to the boat, to bid the boy enter it, and turned away in silence.

"Well," said Merry, with firmness, "if it be right that a lieutenant shall stay by the wreck, it must also be right for a midshipman!—Shove off; neither Mr. Barnstable nor myself will quit the vessel."

"Boy, your life has been intrusted to my keeping, and at my hands will it be required," said the commander, lifting the struggling youth, and tossing him into the arms of the seamen.—"Away with ye, and God be with you; there is more weight in you now than can go safe to land."

Still the seamen hesitated, for they perceived the cockswain moving, with a steady tread, along the deck, and they hoped he had relented, and would yet persuade the lieutenant to join his crew. But Tom, imitating the example of his commander, seized the latter suddenly in his

powerful grasp, and threw him over the bulwarks with an irresistible force. At the same moment he cast the fast of the boat from the pin that held it, and lifting his broad hands high in the air, his voice was heard high in the tempest:

"God's will be done with me!" he cried. "I saw the first timber of the *Ariel* laid, and shall live just long enough to see it torn out of her bottom; after which I wish to live no longer."

But his shipmates were swept far beyond the sound of his voice before half these words were uttered. All command of the boat was rendered impossible by the numbers it contained, as well as the raging of the surf; and, as it rose on the white crest of a wave, Tom saw his beloved little craft for the last time. It fell into a trough of the sea, and in a few moments more its fragments were ground into splinters on the adjacent rocks. The cockswain still remained where he had cast off the rope, and beheld the numerous heads and arms that appeared rising, at short intervals, on the waves, some making powerful and well-directed efforts to gain the sands, that were becoming visible as the tide fell, and others wildly tossed in the frantic movements of helpless despair. The honest old seaman gave a cry of joy, as he saw Barnstable issue from the surf, bearing the form of Merry in safety to the sands, where one by one several seamen soon appeared also, dripping and exhausted. Many others of the crew were carried, in a similar manner, to places of safety; though, as Tom returned to his seat on the bowsprit, he could not conceal from his reluctant eyes the lifeless forms that were, in other spots, driven against the rocks with a fury that soon left them but a few of the outward vestiges of humanity.

Dillon and the cockswain were now the sole occupants of their dreadful station. The former stood in a kind of stupid despair, a witness of the scene we have related; but as his curdled blood began again to flow more warmly through his heart, he crept close to the side of Tom, with that sort of selfish feeling that makes even hopeless misery more tolerable, when endured in participation with another.

"When the tide falls," he said, in a voice that betrayed the agony of fear, though his words expressed the renewal of hope, "we shall be able to walk to land."

"There was One, and only One, to whose feet the waters were the same as a dry deck," returned the cockswain; "and none but such as have His power will ever be able to walk from these rocks to the sands." The old seaman paused, and turning his eyes, which exhibited a mingled expression of disgust and compassion, on his companion, he added, with reverence: "Had you thought more of Him in fair weather, your case would be less to be pitied in this tempest."

"Do you still think there is much danger?" asked Dillon.

"To them that have reason to fear death. Listen; do you hear that hollow noise beneath ye?"

"'Tis the wind driving by the vessel!"

"'Tis the poor thing herself," said the affected cockswain, "giving her last groans. The water is breaking up her decks, and, in a few minutes more, the handsomest model that ever cut a wave will be like the chips that fell from her timbers in framing!"

"Why, then, did you remain here?" cried Dillon, wildly.

"To die in my coffin, if it should be the will of God," returned Tom. "These waves, to me, are what the land is to you; I was born on them, and I have always meant that they should be my grave."

"But I—I," shrieked Dillon, "I am not ready to die!—I cannot die!—I will not die!"

"Poor wretch!" muttered his companion; "you must go, like the rest of us; when the death-watch is called, none can skulk from the muster."

"I can swim," Dillon continued, rushing with frantic eagerness to the side of the wreck. "Is there no billet of wood, no rope, that I can take with me?"

"None; everything has been cut away, or carried off by the saa. If ye are about

to strive for your life, take with ye a stout heart and a clean conscience, and trust the rest to God!"

"God!" echoed Dillon, in the madness of his frenzy; "I know no God! there is no God that knows me!"

"Peace!" said the deep tones of the cockswain, in a voice that seemed to speak in the elements; "blasphemer, peace!"

The heavy groaning, produced by the water in the timbers of the *Ariel*, at that moment added its impulse to the raging feelings of Dillon, and he cast himself headlong into the sea.

The water, thrown by the rolling of the surf on the beach, was necessarily returned to the ocean, in eddies, in different places favorable to such an action of the element. Into the edge of these counter-currents, that was produced by the very rocks on which the schooner lay, and which the watermen call the "undertow," Dillon had, unknowingly, thrown his person; and when the waves had driven him a short distance from the wreck, he was met by a stream that his most desperate efforts could not overcome. He was a light and powerful swimmer, and the struggle was hard and protracted. With the shore immediately before his eyes, and at no great distance, he was led, as by a false phantom, to continue his efforts, although they did not advance him a foot. The old seaman, who at first had watched his motions with careless indifferene, understood the danger of his situation at a glance; and, forgetful of his own fate, he shouted aloud, in a voice that was driven over the struggling victim to the ears of his shipmates on the sands:

"Sheer to port, and clear the undertow! sheer to the southward!"

Dillon heard the sounds, but his faculties were too much obscured by terror to distinguish their object; he, however, blindly yielded to the call, and gradually changed his direction, until his face was once more turned toward the vessel. The current swept him diagonally by the rocks, and he was forced into an eddy, where he had nothing to contend against but the waves, whose violence was much broken by the wreck. In this state, he continued still to struggle, but with a force that was too much weakened to overcome the resistance he met. Tom looked around him for a rope, but all had gone over with the spars, or been swept away by the waves. At this moment of disappointment his eyes met those of the desperate Dillon. Calm, and inured to horrors, as was the veteran seaman, he involuntarily passed his hand before his brow to exclude the look of despair he encountered; and when, a moment afterward, he removed the rigid member, he beheld the sinking form of the victim as it gradually settled in the ocean, still struggling, with regular but impotent strokes of the arms and feet, to gain the wreck, and to preserve an existence that had been so much abused in its hour of allotted probation.

"He will soon know his God, and learn that his God knows him!" murmured the cockswain to himself. As he yet spoke, the wreck of the *Ariel* yielded to an overwhelming sea, and, after a universal shudder, her timbers and planks gave way, and were swept toward the cliffs, bearing the body of the simple-hearted cockswain among the ruins.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Let us think of them that sleep
Full many a fathom deep,
By the wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!"—CAMPBELL.

LONG and dreary did the hours appear to Barnstable, before the falling tide had so far receded as to leave the sands entirely exposed to his search for the bodies of his lost shipmates. Several had been rescued from the wild fury of the waves themselves; and one by one, as the melancholy conviction that life had ceased was forced on the survivors, they had been decently interred in graves dug on the very margin of that element on which they had passed their lives. But still the form longest known and most beloved was missing, and the lieutenant paced the broad space that was now left between the foot of the cliffs and the raging ocean,

with hurried strides and a feverish eye, watching and following those fragments of the wreck that the sea still continued to cast on the beach. Living and dead, he now found that, of those who had lately been in the *Ariel*, only two were missing. Of the former he could muster but twelve, besides Merry and himself, and his men had already interred more than half that number of the latter, which, together, embraced all who had trusted their lives to the frail keeping of the whale-boat.

"Tell me not, boy, of the impossibility of his being safe," said Barnstable, in deep agitation, which he in vain struggled to conceal from the anxious youth, who thought it unnecessary to follow the uneasy motions of his commander, as he strode along the sands. "How often have men been found floating on pieces of wreck, days after the loss of their vessel! And you can see, with your own eyes, that the falling water has swept the planks this distance; ay, a good half league from where she struck. Does the lookout, from the top of the cliffs, make no signal of seeing him yet?"

"None, sir, none; we shall never see him again. The men say that he always thought it sinful to desert a wreck, and that he did not even strike out once for his life, though he has been known to swim an hour, when a whale has stove his boat. God knows, sir," added the boy, hastily dashing a tear from his eye by a stolen movement of his hand, "I loved Tom Coffin better than any foremast man, in either vessel. You seldom came aboard the frigate but we had him in the steerage among us reefers, to hear his long yarns and share our cheer. We all loved him, Mr. Barnstable; but love cannot bring the dead to life again."

"I know it, I know it," said Barnstable, with a huskiness in his voice that betrayed the depth of his emotion. "I am not so foolish as to believe in impossibilities; but while there is a hope of his living, I will never abandon poor Tom Coffin to such a dreadful fate. Think, boy, he may at this moment be looking at us, and praying to his Maker that He would turn our eyes upon him; ay, praying to his God, for Tom often prayed, though he did it in his watch, standing, and in silence."

"If he had clung to life so strongly," returned the midshipman, "he would have struggled harder to preserve it."

Barnstable stopped short in his hurried walk, and fastened a look of opening conviction on his companion; but, as he was about to speak in reply, the shouts of the seamen reached his ears, and, turning, they saw the whole party running along the beach, and motioning, with violent gestures, to an intermediate point in the ocean. The lieutenant and Merry hurried back, and, as they approached the men, they distinctly observed a human figure borne along by the waves, at moments seeming to rise above them, and already floating in the last of the breakers. They had hardly ascertained so much when a heavy swell carried the inanimate body far upon the sands, where it was left by the retiring waters.

"'Tis my cockswain!" cried Barnstable, rushing to the spot. He stopped suddenly, however, as he came within view of the features, and it was some little time before he appeared to have collected his faculties sufficiently to add, in tones of deep horror: "What wretch is this, boy? his form is unmutilated, and yet observe the eyes! they seem as if the sockets would not contain them, and they gaze as wildly as if their owner yet had life—the hands are open and spread, as though they would still buffet the waves!"

"The Jonah, the Jonah!" shouted the seamen, with savage exultation, as they successively approached the corpse: "away with his carrion into the sea again! give him to the sharks! let him tell his lies in the claws of the lobsters!"

Barnstable had turned away from the revolting sight in disgust, but when he discovered these indications of impotent revenge in the remnant of his crew, he said, in that voice which all respected and still obeyed:

"Stand back; back with ye, fellows! Would you disgrace your manhood and seamanship by wreaking your vengeance

on him whom God has already in judgment?" A silent but significant gesture toward the earth succeeded his words, and he walked slowly away.

"Bury him in the sands, boys," said Merry, when his commander was at some little distance; "the next tide will unearth him."

The seamen obeyed his orders, while the midshipman rejoined his commander, who continued to pace along the beach, occasionally halting to throw his uneasy glances over the water, and then hurrying onward at a rate that caused his youthful companion to exert his greatest power to maintain the post he had taken at his side. Every effort to discover the lost cockswain was, however, after two hours' more search, abandoned as fruitless; and with reason, for the sea was never known to give up the body of the man who might be emphatically called its own dead.

"There goes the sun, already dropping behind the cliffs," said the lieutenant, throwing himself on a rock; "and the hour will soon arrive to set the dog-watches; but we have nothing left to watch over, boy—the surf and rocks have not even left us a whole plank that we may lay our heads on for the night."

"The men have gathered many articles on yon beach, sir," returned the lad; "they have found arms to defend ourselves with, and food to give us strength to use them."

"And who shall be our enemy?" asked Barnstable, bitterly; "shall we shoulder our dozen pikes, and carry England by boarding?"

"We may not lay the whole island under contribution," continued the boy, anxiously watching the expression of his commander's eye; "but we may still keep ourselves in work until the cutter returns from the frigate. I hope, sir, you do not think our case so desperate as to intend yielding as prisoners."

"Prisoners!" exclaimed the lieutenant; "no, no, lad, it has not got to that yet! England has been able to wreck my craft, I must concede; but she has, as yet, obtained no other advantage over us. She was a precious model, Merry! the cleanest run, and the nearest entrance, that are ever united on the stem and stern of the same vessel! Do you remember the time, yonker, when I gave the frigate my topsails, in beating out of the Chesapeake! I could always do it, in smooth water with a whole-sail breeze. But she was a frail thing! a frail thing, boy, and could bear but little."

"A mortar-ketch would have thumped to pieces where she lay," returned the midshipman.

"Ay, it was asking too much of her, to expect she could hold together on a bed of rocks. Merry, I loved her; dearly did I love her; she was my first command, and I knew and loved every timber and bolt in her beautiful frame!"

"I believe it is as natural, sir, for a seaman to love the wood and iron in which he has floated over the depths of the ocean for so many days and nights," rejoined the boy, "as it is for a father to love the members of his own family."

"Quite, quite, ay, more so," said Barnstable, speaking as if he were choked by emotion. Merry felt the heavy grasp of the lieutenant on his slight arm, while his commander continued, in a voice that gradually increased in power, as his feelings predominated: "And yet, boy, a human being cannot love the creature of his own formation as he does the works of God. A man can never regard his ship as he does his shipmates. I sailed with him, boy, and when everything seemed bright and happy, as at your age; when, as he often expressed it, I knew nothing and feared nothing. I was then a truant from an old father and a kind mother, and he did that for me which no parents could have done in my situation—he was my father and my mother on the deep!—hours, days, even months, has he passed in teaching me the arts of our profession; and now, in my manhood, he has followed me from ship to ship, from sea to sea, and has only quitted me to die, where I should have died—as if he felt the disgrace of abandoning the poor *Ariel* to her fate, by herself!"

"No, no, no—'twas his superstitious

pride!" interrupted Merry; but perceiving that the head of Barnstable had sunk between his hands, as if he would conceal his emotion, the boy added no more; but he sat respectfully watching the display of feeling that his officer in vain endeavored to suppress. Merry felt his own form quiver with sympathy at the shuddering which passed through Barnstable's frame; and the relief experienced by the lieutenant himself was not greater than that which the midshipman felt, as the latter beheld large tears forcing their way through the other's fingers, and falling on the sands at his feet. They were followed by a violent burst of emotion, such as is seldom exhibited in the meridian of life; but which, when it conquers the nature of one who has buffeted the chances of the world with the loftiness of his sex and character, breaks down every barrier, and seems to sweep before it, like a rushing torrent, all the factitious defenses which habit and education have created to protect the pride of manhood. Merry had often beheld the commanding severity of the lieutenant's manner in moments of danger, with deep respect; he had been drawn toward him by kindness and affection, in times of gayety and recklessness; but he now sat for many minutes, profoundly silent, regarding his officer with sensations that were nearly allied to awe. The struggle with himself was long and severe in the bosom of Barnstable; but, at length, the calm of relieved passions succeeded to his emotions. When he arose from the rock, and removed his hands from his features, his eye was hard and proud, his brow slightly contracted, and he spoke in a voice so harsh that it startled his companion:

"Come, sir; why are we here and idle? Are not yon poor fellows looking up to us for advice and orders how to proceed in this exigency? Away, away. Mr. Merry, it is not a time to be drawing figures in the sand with your dirk; the flood-tide will soon be in, and we may be glad to hide our heads in some cavern among these rocks. Let us be stirring, sir, while we have the sun, and muster enough food and arms to keep life in us, and our enemies off us, until we can once more get afloat." The wondering boy, whose experience had not yet taught him to appreciate the reaction of the passions, started at this unexpected summons to his duty, and followed Barnstable toward the group of distant seamen. The lieutenant, who was instantly conscious how far pride had rendered him unjust, soon moderated his long strides, and continued in milder tones, which were quickly converted into his usual frank communications, though they still remained tinged with a melancholy that time only could entirely remove:

"We have been unlucky, Mr. Merry, but we need not despair—these lads have gotten together abundance of supplies, I see, and, with our arms, we can easily make ourselves masters of some of the enemy's smaller craft, and find our way back to the frigate when this gale has blown itself out. We must keep ourselves close, though, or we shall have the redcoats coming down upon us like so many sharks around a wreck. Ah! God bless her, Merry! there is not such a sight to be seen on the whole beach as two of her planks holding together."

The midshipman, without adverting to this sudden allusion to their vessel, prudently pursued the train of ideas in which his commander had started.

"There is an opening into the country but a short distance south of us, where a brook empties into the sea," he said. "We might find a cover in it, or in the wood above, into which it leads, until we can have a survey of the coast, or can seize some vessel to carry us off."

"There would be a satisfaction in waiting till the morning watch, and then carrying that accursed battery, which took off the better leg of the poor *Ariel!*" said the lieutenant, "the thing might be done, boy, and we could hold the work, too, until the *Alacrity* and the frigate drew into land."

"If you prefer storming works to boarding vessels, there is a fortress of stone, Mr. Barnstable, which lies directly on our beam. I could see it through the haze, when I was on the cliffs, stationing the lookout and——"

"And what, boy? speak without fear: this is a time for free consultation."

"Why, sir, the garrison might not all be hostile—we should liberate Mr. Griffith and the marines; besides——"

"Besides what, sir?"

"I should have an opportunity, perhaps, of seeing my cousin Cecilia, and my cousin Katherine."

The countenance of Barnstable grew animated as he listened, and he answered with something of his usual cheerful manner:

"Ay, that, indeed, would be a work worth carrying! and the rescuing of our shipmates, and the marines, would read like a thing of military discretion—ha! hoy! all the rest would be incidental, yonker; like the capture of the fleet, after you have whipped the convoy."

"I do suppose, sir, that if the Abbey be taken, Colonel Howard will own himself a prisoner of war."

"And Colonel Howard's wards! now there is good sense in this scheme of thine, Master Merry, and I will give it proper reflection. But here are our poor fellows; speak cheeringly to them, sir, that we may hold them in temper for our enterprise."

Barnstable and the midshipmen joined their shipwrecked companions, with that air of authority which is seldom wanting between the superior and inferior, in nautical intercourse, but at the same time with a kindness of speech and looks that might have been a little increased by the critical situation. After partaking of the food which had been selected from among the fragments that still lay scattered, for more than a mile, along the beach, the lieutenant directed the seamen to arm themselves with such weapons as offered, and also to make sufficient provision, from the schooner's stores, to last them for four-and-twenty hours longer. These orders were soon executed; and the whole party, led by Barnstable and Merry, proceeded along the foot of the cliffs, in quest of the opening in the rocks through which the little rivulet found a passage to the ocean. The weather contributed, as much as the seclusion of the spot, to prevent any discovery of the small party, which pursued its object with a disregard of caution that might, under other circumstances, have proved fatal to its safety. Barnstable paused in his march when they had all entered the deep ravine, and ascended nearly to the brow of the precipice that formed one of its sides, to take a last and more scrutinizing survey of the sea. His countenance exhibited the abandonment of all hope, as his eye moved slowly from the northern to the southern boundary of the horizon, and he prepared to pursue his march, by moving, reluctantly, up the stream, when the boy, who still clung to his side, exclaimed joyously:

"Sail ho! It must be the frigate in the offing!"

"A sail!" repeated his commander; "whereaway do you see a sail in this tempest? Can there be another as hardy and unfortunate as ourselves?"

"Look to the starboard hand of the point of rock to windward!" cried the boy; "now you lose it—ah! now the sun falls upon it! 'tis a sail, sir, sure as canvas can be spread in such a gale!"

"I see what you mean," returned the other, "but it seems a gull skimming the sea! nay, now it rises, indeed, and shows itself like a bellying topsail. Pass up that glass, lads; here is a fellow in the offing who may prove a friend."

Merry waited the result of the lieutenant's examination with youthful impatience, and did not fail to ask immediately:

"Can you make it out, sir? Is it the ship or the cutter?"

"Come, there seemeth yet some hope left for us, boy," returned Barnstable, closing the glass; "'tis a ship lying-to under her maintopsail. If one might but dare to to show himself on these heights, he would raise her hull and make sure of her character! But I think I know her spars, though even her topsail dips at times, when there is nothing to be seen but her bare poles; and they shortened by the topgallant masts."

"One would swear," said Merry, laughing, as much through the excitement pro-

duced by this intelligence, as at his conceit, "that Captain Munson would never carry wood aloft when he can't carry canvas. I remember, one night, Mr. Griffith was a little vexed, and said, around the capstan, he believed the next order would be to rig the bowsprit, and house lowermasts!"

"Ay, ay, Griffith is a lazy dog, and sometimes gets lost in the fogs of his own thoughts," said Barnstable; "and I suppose Old Moderate was in a breeze. However, this looks as if he were in earnest; he must have kept the ship away, or she would never have been where she is; I do verily believe the old gentleman remembers that he has a few of his officers and men on this accursed island. This is well, Merry; for should we take the Abbey, we have a place at hand in which to put our prisoners."

"We must have patience till the morning," added the boy, "for no boat would attempt to land in such a sea."

"No boat could land! The best boat that ever floated, boy, has sunk in these breakers! But the wind lessens, and before morning the sea will fall. Let us on, and find a berth for our poor lads, where they can be made more comfortable."

The two officers now descended from their elevation, and led the way still farther up the deep and narrow dell, until, as the ground rose gradually before them, they found themselves in a dense wood, on a level with the adjacent country.

"Here should be a ruin at hand, if I have a true reckoning, and know my courses and distances," said Barnstable; "I have a chart about me that speaks of such a landmark."

The lieutenant turned away from the laughing expression of the boy's eyes, as the latter archly inquired:

"Was it made by one who knows the coast well, sir? or was it done by some school-boy, to learn his maps, as the girls work samplers?"

"Come, yonker, no sampler of your impudence. But look ahead; can you see any habitation that has been deserted?"

"Ay, sir, here is a pile of stones before us, that looks as dirty and ragged as if it was a soldier's barrack; can this be what you seek?"

"Faith, this has been a whole town in its day! we should call it a city in America, and furnish it with a mayor, aldermen, and recorder—you might stow old Faneuil Hall in one of its lockers."

With this sort of careless dialogue, which Barnstable engaged in that his men might discover no alteration in his manner, they approached the moldering walls that had proved so frail a protection to the party under Griffith.

A short time was passed in examining the premises, when the wearied seamen took possession of one of the dilapidated apartments, and disposed themselves to seek that rest of which they had been deprived by the momentous occurrences of the past night.

Barnstable waited until the loud breathing of the seamen assured him that they slept, when he aroused the drowsy boy, who was fast losing his senses in the same sort of oblivion, and motioned him to follow. Merry arose, and they stole together from the apartment with guarded steps, and penetrated more deeply into the gloomy recesses of the place.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"*Mercury.*—I permit thee to be Sosia again."
—DRYDEN.

WE must leave the two adventurers winding their way among the broken piles, and venturing boldly between the tottering arches of the ruin, to accompany the reader, at the same hour, within the more comfortable walls of the Abbey; where, it will be remembered, Borroughcliffe was left in a condition of very equivocal ease. As the earth had, however, in the interval, nearly run its daily round, circumstances had intervened to release the soldier from his confinement—and no one, ignorant of the fact, would suppose that the gentleman, who was now seated at the hospitable board of Colonel Howard, directing, with so much discretion, the energies of his masticators to the delicacies of the feast,

could read in his careless air and smiling visage, that those foragers of Nature had been so recently condemned, for four long hours, to the mortification of discussing the barren subject of his own sword-hilt. Borroughcliffe, however, maintained not only his usual post, but his well-earned reputation, at the table, with his ordinary coolness of demeanor; though at times there were fleeting smiles that crossed his military aspect which sufficiently indicated that he considered the matter of his reflection to be of a particularly ludicrous character.

In the young man who sat by his side, dressed in the deep blue jacket of a seaman, with the fine white linen of his collar contrasting strongly with the black silk handkerchief that was tied with studied negligence around his neck, and whose easy air and manner contrasted still more strongly with this attire, the reader will discover Griffith. The captive paid much less devotion to the viands than his neighbor, though he affected more attention to the business of the table than he actually bestowed, with a sort of consciousness that it would relieve the blushing maiden who presided. The laughing eyes of Katherine Plowden were glittering by the side of the mild countenance of Alice Dunscombe, and, at times, were fastened in droll interest on the rigid and upright exterior that Captain Manual maintained, directly opposite to where she was seated. A chair had, also, been placed for Dillon—of course it was vacant.

"And so, Borroughcliffe," cried Colonel Howard, with a freedom of voice, and a vivacity in his air, that announced the increasing harmony of the repast, "the sea-dog left you nothing to chew but the cud of his resentment!"

"That and my sword-hilt," returned the immovable recruiting-officer. "Gentlemen, I know not how your Congress rewards military achievements; but if that worthy fellow were in my company, he should have a halberd within a week—spurs I would not offer him, for he affects to spurn their use."

Griffith smiled, and bowed in silence to the liberal compliment of Borroughcliffe; but Manual took on himself the task of replying:

"Considering the drilling the man has received, the conduct has been well enough, sir; though a well-trained soldier would not only have made prisoners, but he would have secured them."

"I perceive, my good comrade, that your thoughts are running on the exchange," said Borroughcliffe, good-humoredly; "we will fill, sir, and, by permission of the ladies, drink to a speedy restoration of rights to both parties—the *statu quo ante bellum!*"

"With all my heart!" cried the colonel; "and Cicely and Miss Katherine will pledge the sentiment in a woman's sip; will ye not, my fair wards?—Mr. Griffith, I honor this proposition of yours, which will not only liberate yourself, but restore to us my kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon. Kit had imagined the thing well; ha! Borroughcliffe! 'twas ingeniously contrived, but the fortune of war interposed itself to his success; and yet it is a deep and inexplicable mystery to me, how Kit should have been conveyed from the Abbey with so little noise, and without raising the alarm."

"Christopher is a man who understands the philosophy of silence, as well as that of rhetoric," returned Borroughcliffe, "and must have learned, in his legal studies, it is sometimes necessary to conduct matters *sub silentio*. You smile at my Latin, Miss Plowden, but really, since I have become an inhabitant of this monkish abode, my little learning is stimulated to unwonted efforts—nay, you are pleased to be yet more merry! I used the language, because silence is a theme in which you ladies take but little pleasure."

Katherine, however, disregarded the slight pique that was apparent in the soldier's manner; but, after following the train of her own thoughts in silent enjoyment for a moment longer, she seemed to yield to their drollery, and laughed until her dark eyes flashed with merriment. Cecilia did not assume the severe gravity with which she sometimes endeavored to repress what she thought the unseasonable mirth of her cousin; and the wonder-

ing Griffith fancied, as he glanced his eye from one to the other, that he could discern a suppressed smile playing among the composed features of Alice Dunscombe. Katherine, however, soon succeeded in repressing the paroxysm, and, with an air of infinitely comic gravity, she replied to the remark of the soldier:

"I think I have heard of such a process in nautical affairs as towing, but I must appeal to Mr. Griffith for the correctness of the term."

"You could not speak with more accuracy," returned the young sailor, with a look that sent the conscious blood to the temples of the lady, "though you had made marine terms your study."

"The profession requires less thought, perhaps, than you imagine, sir; but is this towing often done, as Captain Borroughcliffe—I beg his pardon—as the monks have it, *sub silentio?*"

"Spare me, fair lady," cried the captain, "and we will establish a compact of mutual grace; you to forgive my learning, and I to suppress my suspicions."

"Suspicions, sir, is a word that a lady must defy."

"And defiance a challenge that a soldier can never receive; so I must submit to talk English, though the fathers of the Church were my companions. I suspect that Miss Plowden has it in her power to explain the manner of Mr. Christopher Dillon's departure."

The lady did not reply, but a second burst of merriment succeeded, of a liveliness and duration quite equal to the former.

"How's this?" exclaimed the colonel; "permit me to say, Miss Plowden, your mirth is very extraordinary!—I trust no disrespect has been offered to my kinsman?—Mr. Griffith, our terms are that the exchange shall only be made on condition that equally good treatment has been extended to the parties!"

"If Mr. Dillon can complain of no greater evil than that of being laughed at by Miss Plowden, sir, he has reason to call himself a happy fellow."

"I know not, sir; God forbid that I should forget what is due to my guests, gentlemen! but ye have entered my dwelling as foes to my prince."

"But not to Colonel Howard, sir."

"I know no difference, Mr. Griffith. King George or Colonel Howard—Colonel Howard or King George. Our feelings, our fortunes, and our fate, are as one; with the mighty odds that Providence has established between the prince and his people! I wish no other fortune than to share, at a humble distance, the weal or woe of my sovereign!"

"You are not called upon, dear sir, to do either, by the thoughtlessness of us ladies," said Cecilia, rising; "but here comes one who should turn our thoughts to a more important subject—our dress."

Politeness induced Colonel Howard, who both loved and respected his niece, to defer his remarks to another time; and Katherine, springing from her chair with childish eagerness, flew to the side of her cousin, who was directing a servant that had announced the arrival of one of those erratic vendors of small articles, who supply, in remote districts of the country, the places of more regular traders, to show the lad into the dining-parlor. The repast was so far ended as to render this interruption less objectionable; and, as all felt the object of Cecilia to be the restoration of harmony, the boy was ushered into the room without further delay. The contents of his small basket, consisting chiefly of essences, and the small articles of female economy, were playfully displayed on the table by Katherine, who declared herself the patroness of the itinerant youth, and who laughingly appealed to the liberality of the gentlemen in behalf of her *protégé*.

"You perceive, my dear guardian, that the boy must be loyal; for he offers, here, perfume that is patronized by no less than two royal dukes: do suffer me to place a box aside for your special use. You consent; I see it in your eye. And, Captain Borroughcliffe, as you appear to be forgetting the use of your own language, here is even a horn-book for you! How admirably provided he seems to be! You must have had St. Ruth in view, when you laid in your stock, child?"

"Yes, my lady," the boy replied, with a bow that was studiously awkward; "I have often heard of the grand ladies that dwell in the old Abbey, and I have journeyed a few miles beyond my rounds to gain their custom."

"And surely they cannot disappoint you. Miss Howard, that is a palpable hint to your purse; and I know that not even Miss Alice can escape contribution, in these troublesome times. Come, aid me, child; what have you to recommend, in particular, to the favor of these ladies?"

The lad approached the basket and rummaged its contents, for a moment, with the appearance of deep, mercenary interest; and then, without lifting his hand from the confusion he had caused, he said, while he exhibited something within the basket to the view of his smiling observer:

"This, my lady."

Katherine started, and glanced her eyes, with a piercing look, at the countenance of the boy, and then turned them uneasily from face to face, with conscious timidity. Cecilia had effected her object, and had resumed her seat in silent abstraction; Alice was listening to the remarks of Captain Manual and the host, as they discussed the propriety of certain military usages; Griffith seemed to hold communion with his mistress, by imitating her silence; but Katherine, in her stolen glances, met the keen look of Borroughcliffe, fastened on her face in a manner that did not fail instantly to suspend the scrutiny.

"Come, Cecilia," she cried, after a pause of a moment, "we trespass too long on the patience of the gentlemen; not only to keep possession of our seats, ten minutes after the cloth has been drawn, but even to introduce our essences, and tapes, and needles, among the Madeira, and—shall I add, cigars, colonel?"

"Not while we are favored with the company of Miss Plowden, certainly."

"Come, my coz; I perceive the colonel is growing particularly polite, which is a never-failing sign that he tires of our presence."

Cecilia rose, and was leading the way to the door, when Katherine turned to the lad, and added:

"You can follow us to the drawing-room, child, where we can make our purchases, without exposing the mystery of our toilets."

"Miss Plowden has forgotten my horn-book, I believe," said Borroughcliffe, advancing from the standing group who surrounded the table; "possibly I can find some work in the basket of the boy better fitted for the improvement of a grown-up young gentleman than the elementary treatise."

Cecilia, observing him to take his basket from the lad, resumed her seat, and her example was necessarily followed by Katherine, though not without some manifest indications of vexation.

"Come hither, boy, and explain the uses of your wares. This is soap, and this a penknife, I know; but what name do you affix to this?"

"That? that is tape," returned the lad, with an impatience that might very naturally be attributed to the interruption that was thus given to his trade.

"And this?"

"That?" repeated the stripling, pausing with a hesitation between his sulkiness and doubt; "that——"

"Come, this is a little ungallant!" cried Katherine; "to keep three ladies dying with impatience to possess themselves of their finery, while you detain the boy to ask the name of a tambouring-needle!"

"I should apologize for asking questions that are so easily answered; but perhaps he will find the next more difficult to solve," returned Borroughcliffe, placing the subject of his inquiries in the palm of his hand, in such a manner as to conceal it from all but the boy and himself.

"This has a name, too; what is it?"

"That?—that—is sometimes called—white-line."

"Perhaps you mean a white lie!"

"How, sir!" exclaimed the lad, a little fiercely, "a lie?"

"Only a white one," returned the captain. "What do you call this, Miss Dunscombe?"

"We call it bobbin, sir, generally in the north," said the placid Alice.

"Ay, bobbin, or white-line; they are the same thing," added the young trader.

"They are? I think, now, for a professional man, you know but little of the terms of your art," observed Borroughcliffe, with an affectation of irony; "I never have seen a youth of your years who knew less. What names, now, would you affix to this—and this—and this?"

While the captain was speaking, he drew from his pocket the several instruments that the cockswain had made use of the preceding night to secure his prisoner.

"That," exclaimed the lad, with the eagerness of one who would vindicate his reputation, "is ratlin-stuff; and this is marline; and that is sennit."

"Enough, enough," said Borroughcliffe; "you have exhibited sufficient knowledge to convince me that you *do* know something of your *trade*, and nothing of these articles. Mr. Griffith, do you claim this boy?"

"I believe I must, sir," said the young sea-officer, who had been intently listening to the examination. "On whatever errand you have now ventured here, Mr. Merry, it is useless to affect further concealment."

"Merry!" exclaimed Cecilia Howard; "is it you, then, my cousin? are you, too, fallen into the power of your enemies! Was it not enough that——"

The young lady recovered her recollection in time to suppress the remainder of the sentence, though the grateful expression of Griffith's eye sufficiently indicated that he had, in his thoughts, filled the sentence with expressions abundantly flattering to his own feelings.

"How's this, again?" cried the colonel; "my two wards embracing and fondling a vagrant, vagabond pedler, before my eyes! Is this treason, Mr. Griffith, or what means the extraordinary visit of this young gentleman?"

"Is it extraordinary, sir," said Merry himself, losing his assumed awkwardness, in the ease and confidence of one whose faculties had been early exercised, "that a boy, like myself, destitute of mother and sisters, should take a like risk on himself, to visit the only two female relatives he has in the world?"

"Why this disguise, then? surely, young gentleman, it was unnecessary to enter the dwelling of old George Howard on such an errand clandestinely, even though your tender years have been practiced on, to lead you astray from your allegiance. Mr. Griffith and Captain Manual must pardon me, if I express sentiments, at my own table, that they may find unpleasant; but this business requires us to be explicit."

"The hospitality of Colonel Howard is unquestionable," returned the boy; "but he has a great reputation for his loyalty to the crown."

"Ay, young gentleman; and, I trust, with some justice."

"Would it, then, be safe to intrust my person in the hands of one who might think it his duty to detain me?"

"This is plausible enough, Captain Borroughcliffe, and I doubt not the boy speaks with candor. I would, now, that my kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon, were here, that I might learn if it would be misprision of treason to permit this youth to depart, unmolested, and without exchange?"

"Inquire of the young gentleman after the cacique," returned the recruiting officer, who, apparently satisfied in producing the exposure of Merry, had resumed his seat at the table; "perhaps he is, in verity, an ambassador, empowered to treat on behalf of his highness."

"How say you?" demanded the colonel; "do you know anything of my kinsman?"

The anxious eyes of the whole party were fastened on the boy for many moments, witnessing the sudden change from careless freedom to deep horror expressed in his countenance. At length he uttered, in an undertone, the secret of Dillon's fate.

"He is dead."

"Dead!" repeated every voice in the room.

"Yes, dead," said the boy, gazing at the pallid faces of those who surrounded him.

A long and fearful silence succeeded the

announcement of this intelligence, which was only interrupted by Griffith, who said:

"Explain the manner of his death, sir, and where his body lies."

"His body lies interred in the sands," returned Merry, with a deliberation that proceeded from an opening perception that, if he uttered too much, he might betray the loss of the *Ariel*, and, consequently, endanger the liberty of Barnstable.

"In the sands?" was echoed from every part of the room.

"Ay, in the sands; but how he died, I cannot explain."

"He has been murdered!" exclaimed Colonel Howard, whose command of utterance was now amply restored to him; "he has been treacherously, and dastardly, and basely murdered!"

"He has *not* been murdered," said the boy, firmly; "nor did he meet his death among those who deserve the name either of traitors or of dastards."

"Said you not that he was dead? that my kinsman was buried in the sands of the sea-shore?"

"Both are true, sir——"

"And you refuse to explain how he met his death, and why he has been thus ignominiously interred?"

"He received his interment by my orders, sir; and, if there be ignominy about his grave, his own acts have heaped it on him. As to the manner of his death, I cannot and will not speak."

"Be calm, my cousin," said Cecilia, in an imploring voice; "respect the age of my uncle, and remember his strong attachment to Mr. Dillon."

The veteran had, however, so far mastered his feelings as to continue the dialogue with more recollection.

"Mr. Griffith," he said, "I shall not act hastily—you and your companion will be pleased to retire to your several apartments. I will so far respect the son of my brother Harry's friend as to believe your parole will be sacred. Go, gentlemen; you are unguarded."

The two prisoners bowed low to the ladies and their host, and retired. Griffith, however, lingered a moment on the threshold to say:

"Colonel Howard, I leave the boy to your kindness and consideration. I know you will not forget that his blood mingles with that of one who is most dear to you."

"Enough, enough, sir," said the veteran, waving his hand to him to retire; "and you, ladies; this is not a place for you, either."

"Never will I quit this child," said Katherine, "while such a horrid imputation lies on him. Colonel Howard, act your pleasure on us both, for I suppose you have the power; but his fate shall be my fate."

"There is, I trust, some misconception in this melancholy affair," said Borroughcliffe, advancing into the center of the agitated group; "and I should hope, by calmness and moderation, all may yet be explained. Young gentleman, you have borne arms, and must know, notwithstanding your youth, what it is to be in the power of your enemies?"

"Never!" returned the proud boy; "I am a captive for the first time."

"I speak, sir, in reference to our power."

"You may order me to a dungeon; or, as I have entered the Abbey in disguise, possibly to a gibbet."

"And is that a fate to be met so calmly by one so young?"

"You dare not do it, Captain Borroughcliffe," cried Katherine, involuntarily throwing an arm around the boy, as if to shield him from harm. "You would blush to think of such a cold-blooded act of vengeance, Colonel Howard."

"If we could examine the young man, where the warmth of feeling, which these ladies exhibit, might not be excited," said the captain, apart to his host, "we should gain important intelligence."

"Miss Howord, and you, Miss Plowden," said the veteran, in a manner that long habit had taught his wards to respect, "your young kinsman is not in the keeping of savages, and you can safely confide him to my custody. I am sorry that we have so long kept Miss Alice standing, but she will find relief on the couches of your drawing-room, Cecilia."

Cecilia and Katherine permitted themselves to be conducted to the door by their

polite but determined guardian, where he bowed to their retiring persons with the exceeding courtesy that he never failed to use when in the least excited.

"You appear to know your danger, Mr. Merry," said Borroughcliffe, after the door was closed; "I trust you also know what duty would dictate to one in my situation."

"Do it, sir," returned the boy; "you have a king to render an account to, and I have a country."

"I may have a country also," said Borroughcliffe, with a calmness that was not in the least disturbed by the taunting air with which the youth delivered himself. "It is possible for me, however, to be lenient, even merciful, when the interests of that prince to whom you allude are served—you came not on this enterprise alone, sir?"

"Had I come better attended, Captain Borroughcliffe might have heard these questions instead of putting them."

"I am happy, sir, that your retinue has been so small; and yet, even the rebel schooner called the *Ariel* might have furnished you with more becoming attendance. I cannot but think that you are not far distant from your friends."

"He is near his enemies, your honor," said Sergeant Drill, who had entered the room unobserved; "for here is a boy who says he has been seized in the old ruin, and robbed of his goods and clothes; and by his description this lad should be the thief."

Borroughcliffe signed to the boy, who stood in the background, to advance; and he was instantly obeyed, with all that eagerness which a sense of injury on the part of the sufferer could excite. The tale of this unexpected intruder was soon told, and was briefly this:

He had been assaulted by a man and a boy (the latter was in presence), while arranging his effects, in the ruin, preparatory to exhibiting them to the ladies of the Abbey, and had been robbed of such part of his attire as the boy had found necessary for his disguise, together with his basket of valuables. He had been put into an apartment of an old tower, by the man, for safe keeping; but as the latter frequently ascended to its turret, to survey the country, he had availed himself of this remissness to escape; and, to conclude, he demanded a restoration of his property and vengeance for his wrongs.

Merry heard his loud and angry details with scornful composure, and, before the offended pedler was through his narrative, had divested himself of the borrowed garments, which he threw to the other with singular disdain.

"We are beleaguered, mine host! beset! besieged!" cried Borroughcliffe, when the other had ended. "Here is a rare plan to rob us of our laurels! ay, and of our rewards! But, hark ye, Drill! they have old soldiers to deal with, and we shall look into the matter. One would wish to triumph on foot; you understand me? there was no horse in the battle.—Go, fellow, I see you grow wiser; take this young gentleman—and remember *he is* a young gentleman—put him in safe keeping; but see him supplied with all he wants."

Borroughcliffe bowed politely to the haughty bend of the body with which Merry, who now began to think himself a martyr to his country, followed the orderly from the room.

"There is metal in the lad!" exclaimed the captain; "and if he live to get a beard, 'twill be a hardy dog who ventures to pluck it. I am glad, mine host, that this 'wandering Jew' has arrived, to save the poor fellow's feelings, for I detest tampering with such a noble spirit. I saw, by his eye, that he had squinted oftener over a gun than through a needle!"

"But they have murdered my kinsman!—the loyal, the learned, the ingenious Mr. Christopher Dillon!"

"If they have done so, they shall be made to answer it," said Borroughcliffe, reseating himself at the table, with a coolness that furnished an ample pledge of the impartiality of his judgment; "but let us learn the facts before we do aught hastily."

Colonel Howard was fain to comply with so reasonable a proposition, and he resumed his chair, while his companion

proceeded to institute a close examination of the pedler-boy.

We shall defer, until the proper time may arrive, recording the result of his inquiries; but shall so far satisfy the curiosity of our readers as to tell them that the captain learned sufficient to convince him a very serious attempt was meditated on the Abbey; and, as he thought, enough, also, to enable him to avert the danger.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love.
—MERCHANT OF VENICE.

CECILIA and Katherine separated from Alice Dunscombe in the lower gallery of the cloisters, and the cousins ascended to the apartment which was assigned them as a dressing-room. The intensity of feeling that was gradually accumulating in the breasts of the ladies, as circumstances brought those in whom their deepest interests were centered into situations of extreme delicacy, if not of actual danger, perhaps, in some measure, prevented them from experiencing all that concern which the detection and arrest of Merry might be supposed to excite. The boy, like themselves, was an only child of one of those three sisters who caused the close connection of so many of our characters; and his tender years had led his cousins to regard him with an affection that exceeded the ordinary interest of such an affinity; but they knew that in the hands of Colonel Howard his person was safe, though his liberty might be endangered. When the first emotions, therefore, which were created by his sudden appearance after so long an absence had subsided, their thoughts were rather occupied by the consideration of what consequences, to others, might proceed from his arrest, than by any reflections on the midshipman's actual condition. Secluded from the observations of any strange eyes, the two maidens indulged their feelings, without restraint, according to their several temperaments. Katherine moved to and fro in the apartment with feverish anxiety, while Miss Howard, by concealing her countenance under the ringlets of her luxuriant dark hair, and shading her eyes with a fair hand, seemed to be willing to commune with her thoughts more quietly.

"Barnstable cannot be far distant," said the former, after a few minutes had passed; "for he never would have sent that child on such an errand by himself!"

Cecilia raised her mild blue eyes to the countenance of her cousin, as she answered:

"All thoughts of an exchange must now be abandoned; and perhaps the persons of the prisoners will be held as pledges, to answer for the life of Dillon."

"Can the wretch be dead? or is it merely a threat, or some device of that urchin? He is a forward child, and would not hesitate to speak and act boldly, on emergency."

"He is dead!" returned Cecilia, veiling her face again in horror; "the eyes of the boy, his whole countenance, confirmed his words! I fear, Katherine, that Mr. Barnstable has suffered his resentment to overcome his discretion, when he learned the treachery of Dillon; surely, surely, though the hard usages of war may justify so dreadful a revenge on an enemy, it was unkind to forget the condition of his own friends!"

"Mr. Barnstable has done neither, Miss Howard," said Katherine, checking her uneasy footsteps, her light form swelling with pride: "Mr. Barnstable is equally incapable of murdering an enemy or of deserting a friend!"

"But retaliation is neither deemed nor called murder by men in arms."

"Think it what you will, call it what you will, Cecilia Howard, I will pledge my life that Richard Barnstable has to answer for the blood of none but the open enemies of his country."

"The miserable man may have fallen a sacrifice to the anger of that terrific seaman who led him hence as a captive!"

"That terrific seaman, Miss Howard, has a heart as tender as your own. He is——"

"Nay, Katherine," interrupted Cecilia,

"you chide me unkindly; let us not add to our unavoidable misery by such harsh contention."

"I do not contend with you, Cecilia; I merely defend the absent and the innocent from your unkind suspicions, my cousin."

"Say, rather, your sister," returned Miss Howard, their hands involuntarily closing upon each other, "for we are surely sisters! But let us strive to think of something less horrible. Poor, poor Dillon! now that he has met a fate so terrible, I can even fancy him less artful and more upright than we had thought him! You agree with me, Katherine, I see by your countenance, and we will dwell no longer on the subject. Katherine! my cousin Kate, what say you?"

Miss Plowden, as she relinquished her pressure of the hand of Cecilia, had renewed her walk with a more regulated step; but she was yet making her first turn across the room, when her eyes became keenly set on the opposite window, and her whole frame was held in an attitude of absorbed attention. The rays of the setting sun fell bright upon her dark glances, which seemed fastened on some distant object, and gave an additional glow to the mantling color that was slowly stealing across her cheeks, to her temples. Such a sudden alteration in the manner and appearance of her companion had not failed to catch the attention of Cecilia, who, in consequence, interrupted herself by the agitated question we have related. Katherine slowly beckoned her companion to her side, and, pointing in the direction of the wood that lay in view, she said:

"See yon tower, in the ruin! Do you observe those small spots of pink and yellow that are fluttering above its walls?"

"I do. They are the lingering remnants of the foliage of some tree; but they want the vivid tints which grace the autumn of our own dear America!"

"One is the work of God, and the other has been produced by the art of man. Cecilia, those are no leaves, but they are my own childish signals, and without doubt Barnstable himself is on that ruined tower. Merry cannot, will not, betray him!"

"My life should be a pledge for the honor of our little cousin," said Cecilia. "But you have the telescope of my uncle at hand, ready for such an event! one look through it will ascertain the truth——"

Katherine sprang to the spot where the instrument stood, and with eager hands she prepared it for the necessary observation.

"It is he!" she cried, the instant her eye was put to the glass. "I even see his head above the stones. How unthinking to expose himself so unnecessarily!"

"But what says he, Katherine?" exclaimed Cecilia; "you alone can interpret his meaning."

The little book which contained the explanations of Miss Plowden's signals was now hastily produced, and its leaves rapidly run over in quest of the necessary number.

"'Tis only a question to gain my attention. I must let him know he is observed."

When Katherine, as much to indulge her secret propensities as with any hope of its usefulness, had devised this plan for communicating with Barnstable, she had, luckily, not forgotten to arrange the necessary means to reply to his interrogatories. A very simple arrangement of some of the ornamental cords of the window-curtains enabled her to effect this purpose; and her nimble fingers soon fastened the pieces of silk to the lines, which were now thrown into the air, when these signals in miniature were instantly displayed in the breeze.

"He sees them!" cried Cecilia, "and is preparing to change his flags."

"Keep, then, your eye on him, my cousin, and tell me the colors that he shows, with their order, and I will endeavor to read his meaning."

"He is as expert as yourself! There are two more of them fluttering above the stones again: the upper is white, and the lower black."

"White over black," repeated Katherine, rapidly, to herself, as she turned th

leaves of her book.—"'*My messenger: has he been seen?*' To that we must answer the unhappy truth. Here it is—yellow, white and red—'*He is a prisoner.*' How fortunate that I should have prepared such a question and answer! What says he, Cecilia, to this news?"

"He is busy making his changes, dear. Nay, Katherine, you shake so violently as to move the glass! Now he is done; 'tis yellow over black this time."

"'*Griffith, or who?*' He does not understand us; but I had thought of the poor boy in making out the numbers—ah! here it is; yellow, green, and red—"*My cousin Merry.*'—He cannot fail to understand us now."

"He has already taken in his flags. The news seems to alarm him, for he is less expert than before. He shows them now—they are green, red, and yellow."

"The question is '*Am I safe?*' 'Tis that which made him tardy, Cecilia," continued Katherine. "Barnstable is ever slow to consult his safety. But how shall I answer him? should we mislead him now, how could we ever forgive ourselves?"

"Of Andrew Merry there is no fear," returned Cecilia; "and I think if Captain Borroughcliffe had any intimation of the proximity of his enemies, he would not continue at the table."

"He will stay there while wine will sparkle and man can swallow," said Katherine; "but we know, by sad experience, that he is a soldier on emergency; and yet, I'll trust to his ignorance this time—here, I have an answer: "*You are yet safe, but be wary.*'"

"He reads your meaning with a quick eye, Katherine; and he is ready with his answer, too: he shows green over white this time. Well! do you not hear me? 'tis green over white. Why, you are dumb—what says he, dear?"

Still, Katherine answered not, and her cousin raised her eyes from the glass, and beheld her companion gazing earnestly at the open page, while the glow which excitement had before brought to her cheek was increased to a still deeper bloom.

"I hope your blushes and his signals are not ominous, Kate," added Cecilia; "can green imply his jealousy as white does your purity? what says he, coz?"

"He talks, like yourself, much nonsense," said Katherine, turning to her flags, with a pettish air that was singularly contradicted by her gratified countenance; "but the situation of things requires that I should talk to Barnstable more freely."

"I can retire," said Cecilia, rising from her chair with a grave manner.

"Nay, Cecilia, I do not deserve these looks—'tis you who exhibit levity now! But you can perceive for yourself that evening is closing in, and that some other medium for conversation, beside the eyes, may be adopted.—Here is a signal, which will answer: '*When the Abbey clock strikes nine, come with care to the wicket, which opens at the east side of the paddock, on the road; until then, keep secret.*' I had prepared this very signal in case an interview should be necessary."

"Well, he sees it," returned Cecilia, who had resumed her place by the telescope, "and seems disposed to obey you, for I no longer discern his flags or his person."

Miss Howard now arose from the glass, her observations being ended; but Katherine did not return the instrument to its corner, without fastening one long anxious look through it on what now appeared to be the deserted tower. The interest and anxiety produced by this short and imperfect communication between Miss Plowden and her lover, did not fail to excite reflections in both the ladies, that furnished materials to hold them in earnest discourse, until the entrance of Alice Dunscombe announced that her presence was expected below. Even the unsuspecting Alice, on entering, observed a change in the countenances and demeanor of the two cousins, which betrayed that their secret conference had not been entirely without contention. The features of Cecilia were disturbed and anxious, and their expression was not unlike melancholy; while the dark flashing eye, flushed temples, and proud, determined step of

Katherine exhibited in an equal, if not a greater degree, a very different emotion. As no reference to the subject of their conversation was, however, made by either of the young ladies, after the entrance of Alice, she led the way in silence to the drawing-room.

The ladies were received by Colonel Howard and Borroughcliffe with marked attention. In the former there were moments when a deep gloom would, in spite of his very obvious exertions to the contrary, steal over his open, generous countenance; but the recruiting officer maintained an air of immovable coolness and composure. Twenty times did he detect the piercing looks of Katherine fastened on him with an intentness that a less deliberative man might have had the vanity to misinterpret; but even this flattering testimonial of his power to attract failed to disturb his self-possession. It was in vain that Katherine endeavored to read his countenance, where everything was fixed in military rigidity, though his deportment appeared more than usually easy and natural. Tired at length with her fruitless scrutiny, the excited girl turned her gaze upon the clock; to her amazement, she discovered that it was on the stroke of nine, and, disregarding a deprecating glance from her cousin, she arose and quitted the apartment. Borroughcliffe opened the door for her exit, and while the lady civilly bowed her head in acknowledgment of his attention, their eyes once more met; but she glided quickly by him, and found herself alone in the gallery. Katherine hesitated, more than a minute, to proceed, for she thought she had detected in that glance a lurking expression, that manifested conscious security mingled with secret design. It was not her nature, however, to hesitate when circumstances required that she should be both prompt and alert; and throwing over her slight person a large cloak, that was in readiness for the occasion, she stole warily from the building.

Although Katherine suspected most painfully that Borroughcliffe had received intelligence that might prove dangerous to her lover, she looked around her in vain, on gaining the open air, to discover any alteration in the arrangements for the defense of the Abbey, which might confirm her suspicions, or the knowledge of which might enable her to instruct Barnstable how to avoid the secret danger. Every disposition remained as it had been since the capture of Griffith and his companion. She heard the heavy, quick steps of the sentinel, who was posted beneath their windows, endeavoring to warm himself on his confined post; and, as she paused to listen, she also detected the rattling of arms from the soldier, who, as usual, guarded the approach of that part of the building where his comrades were quartered; The night had set in cloudy and dark, although the gale had greatly subsided toward the close of the day; still the wind swept heavily, and, at moments, with a rushing noise, among the irregular walls of the edifice; and it required the utmost nicety of ear to distinguish even these well-known sounds, among such accompaniments. When Katherine, however, was satisfied that her organs had not deceived her, she turned an anxious eye in the direction of what Borroughcliffe called his "barracks."

Everything in that direction appeared so dark and still as to create a sensation of uneasiness by its very quiet. It might be the silence of sleep that now pervaded the ordinarily gay and mirthful apartment; or it might be the stillness of a fearful preparation! There was no time, however, for further hesitation, and Katherine drew her cloak more closely about her form, and proceeded with light and guarded steps to the appointed spot. As she approached the wicket the clock struck the hour, and she again paused while the mournful sounds were borne by her on the wind, as if expecting that each stroke on the bell would prove a signal to unmask some secret design of Borroughcliffe. As the last vibration melted away, she opened the little gate, and issued on the highway. The figure of a man sprang forward from behind an angle of the wall as she appeared; and, while her heart was still throbbing with the suddenness of the alarm she found herself in the arms

of Barnstable. After the first few words of recognition and pleasure which the young sailor uttered, he acquainted his mistress with the loss of his schooner, and the situation of the survivors.

"And now, Katherine," he concluded, "you have come, I trust, never to quit me; or, at most, to return no more to that old Abbey, unless it be to aid in liberating Griffith, and then to join me again forever."

"Why, truly, there is so much to tempt a young woman to renounce her home and friends, in the description you have just given of your condition, that I hardly know how to refuse your request, Barnstable. You are very tolerably provided with a dwelling in the ruin; and I suppose certain predatory schemes are to be adopted to make it habitable! St. Ruth is certainly well supplied with the necessary articles, but whether we should not be shortly removed to the castle at York or the jail at Newcastle is a question that I put to your discretion."

"Why yield your thoughts to such silly subjects, lovely trifler!" said Barnstable, "when the time and the occasion both urge us to be in earnest?"

"It is a woman's province to be thrifty, and to look after the comforts of domestic life," returned his mistress; "and I would discharge my functions with credit. But I feel you are vexed, for, to see your dark countenance is out of the question, on such a night. When do you propose to commence housekeeping, if I should yield to your proposals?"

"I have not concluded relating my plans, and your provoking wit annoys me! The vessel I have taken will unquestionably come into the land, as the gale dies; and I intend making my escape in her, after beating this Englishman, and securing the liberty of Miss Howard and yourself. I could see the frigate in the offing, even before we left the cliffs."

"This certainly sounds better!" rejoined Katherine, in a manner that indicated she was musing on their prospects; "and yet there may exist some difficulties in the way that you little suspect."

"Difficulties there are none—there can be none."

"Speak not irreverently of the mazes of love, Mr. Barnstable. When was it ever known to exist unfettered or unembarrassed? Even I have an explanation to ask of you, that I would much rather let alone."

"Of me? Ask what you will, or how you will; I am a careless, unthinking fellow, Miss Plowden; but to you I have little to answer for—unless a foolish sort of adoration be an offense against your merits."

Barnstable felt the little hand that was supported on his arm pressing the limb, as Katherine replied, in a tone so changed from its former forced levity that he started as the first sound reached his ears. "Merry has brought in a horrid report!" she said; "I would I could believe it untrue; but the looks of the boy and the absence of Dillon both confirm it."

"Poor Merry! he, too, has fallen into the trap! but they shall yet find one who is too cunning for them. Is it to the fate of that wretched Dillon that you allude?"

"He *was* a wretch," continued Katherine, in the same voice, "and he deserved much punishment at your hands, Barnstable; but life is the gift of God, and is not to be taken whenever human vengeance would appear to require a victim."

"His life was taken by him who bestowed it," said the sailor. "Is it Katherine Plowden who would suspect me of the deed of a dastard?"

"I do not suspect you—I did not suspect you," cried Katherine; "I will never suspect any evil of you again. You are not, you cannot be angry with me, Barnstable? Had you heard the cruel suspicions of my cousin Cecilia, and had your imagination been busy in portraying your wrongs and the temptations to forget mercy, like mine, even while my tongue denied your agency in the suspected deed, you would—you would at least have learned how much easier it is to defend those we love against the open attacks of others than against our own jealous feelings."

"Those words, love and jealousy, will obtain your acquittal," cried Barnstable,

in his natural voice; and, after uttering a few more consoling assurances to Katherine, whose excited feelings found vent in tears, he briefly related the manner of Dillon's death.

"I had hoped I stood higher in the estimation of Miss Howard than to be subjected to even her suspicions," he said, when he had ended his explanation. "Griffith has been but a sorry representative of our trade if he has left such an opinion of its pursuits."

"I do not know that Mr. Griffith would altogether have escaped my conjectures, had he been the disappointed commander, and you the prisoner," returned Katherine; "you know not how much we have both studied the usages of war, and with what dreadful pictures of hostages, retaliations, and military executions, our minds are stored; but a mountain is raised off my spirits, and I could almost say that I am now ready to descend the valley of life in your company."

"It is a discreet determination, my good Katherine, and God bless you for it! The companion may not be so good as you deserve, but you will find him ambitious of your praise. Now let us devise means to effect our object."

"Therein lies another of my difficulties. Griffith, I much fear, will not urge Cecilia to another flight, against her—her—what shall I call it, Barnstable—her caprice, or her judgment? Cecilia will never consent to desert her uncle, and I cannot muster the courage to abandon my poor cousin, in the face of the world, in order to take shelter with even Mr. Richard Barnstable!"

"Speak you from the heart now, Katherine?"

"Very nearly—if not exactly."

"Then have I been cruelly deceived! It is easier to find a path in the trackless ocean, without chart or compass, than to know the windings of a woman's heart!"

"Nay, nay, foolish man; you forget that I am but small, and how very near my head is to my heart; too nigh, I fear, for the discretion of their mistress! But is there no method of forcing Griffith and Cecilia to their own good, without undue violence?"

"It cannot be done; he is my senior in rank, and the instant I release him he will claim the command. A question might be raised, at a leisure moment, on the merits of such a claim—but even my own men are, as you know, nothing but a draft from the frigate, and they would not hesitate to obey the orders of the first-lieutenant, who is not a man to trifle on matters of duty."

"'Tis vexatious, truly," said Katherine, "that all my well-concerted schemes in behalf of this wayward pair should be frustrated by their own willful conduct! But, after all, have you justly estimated your strength, Barnstable? Are you certain that you would be successful, and that without hazard, too, if you should make the attempt!"

"Morally, and, what is better, physically certain. My men are closely hid, where no one suspects an enemy to lie; they are anxious for the enterprise, and the suddenness of the attack will not only make the victory sure, but it will be rendered bloodless. You will aid us in our entrance, Katherine. I shall first secure this recruiting-officer, and his command will then surrender without striking a blow. Perhaps, after all, Griffith will hear reason; if he do not, I will not yield my authority to a released captive without a struggle."

"God send that there shall be no fighting!" murmured his companion, a little appalled at the images his language had raised before her imagination; "and, Barnstable, I enjoin you, most solemnly, by all your affection for me, and by everything you deem most sacred, to protect the person of Colonel Howard at every hazard. There must be no excuse, no pretense, for even an insult to my passionate, good, obstinate, but kind old guardian. I believe I have given him already more trouble than I am entitled to give any one, and Heaven forbid that I should cause him any serious misfortune."

"He shall be safe, and not only he, but all that are with him, as you will perceive, Katherine, when you hear my plan.

Three hours shall not pass over my head before you will see me master of that old Abbey. Griffith, ay, Griffith must be content to be my inferior, until we get afloat again."

"Attempt nothing unless you feel certain of being able to maintain your advantage, not only against your enemies, but also against your friends," said the anxious Katherine. "Rely on it, both Cecilia and Griffith are refining so much on their feelings, that neither will be your ally."

"This comes of passing the four best years of his life within walls of brick, poring over Latin grammars and syntaxes, and such other nonsense, when he should have been rolling them away in a good box of live-oak, and studying, at most, how to sum up his day's work, and tell where his ship lies after a blow. Your college learning may answer well enough for a man who has to live by his wits, but it can be of little use to one who is never afraid to read human nature, by looking his fellow-creatures full in the face, and whose hand is as ready as his tongue. I have generally found the eye that was good at Latin was dull at a compass, or in a night squall; and yet, Griff is a seaman, though I have heard him even read the testament in Greek! Thank God, I had the wisdom to run away from school the second day they undertook to teach me a strange tongue, and I believe I am the more honest man, and the better seaman, for my ignorance!"

"There is no telling what you might have been, Barnstable, under other circumstances," retorted his mistress, with a playfulness of manner that she could not always repress, though it was indulged at the expense of him she most loved: "I doubt not but, under proper training, you would have made a reasonably good priest."

"If you talk of priests, Katherine, I shall remind you that we carry one in the ship. But listen to my plan; we may talk further of priestcraft when an opportunity may offer."

Barnstable then proceeded to lay before his mistress a project he had formed for surprising the Abbey that night, which was so feasible that Katherine, notwithstanding her recent suspicions of Borroughcliffe's designs, came gradually to believe it would succeed. The young seaman answered her objections with the readiness of an ardent mind, bent on executing its purposes, and with a fertility of resources that proved he was no contemptible enemy in matter that required spirited action. Of Merry's remaining firm and faithful he had no doubt; and, although he acknowledged the escape of the pedler-boy, he urged that the lad had seen no other of his party besides himself, whom he mistook for a common marauder.

As the disclosure of these plans was frequently interrupted by little digressions, connected with the peculiar emotions of the lovers, more than an hour flew by before they separated. But Katherine at length reminded him how swiftly the time was passing, and how much remained to be done, when he reluctantly consented to see her once more through the wicket where they parted.

Miss Plowden adopted the same precaution in returning to the house she had used on leaving it; and she was congratulating herself on its success, when her eye caught a glimpse of the figure of a man who was apparently following at some little distance, in her footsteps, and dogging her motions. As the obscure form, however, paused also when she stopped to give it an alarmed though inquiring look, and then slowly retired toward the boundary of the paddock, Katherine, believing it to be Barnstable watching over her safety, entered the Abbey, with every idea of alarm entirely lost in the pleasing reflection of her lover's solicitude.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliffe Hill, a plump of spears,
Beneath a pennon gay."—MARMION.

THE sharp sounds of the supper-bell were ringing along the gallery, as Miss Plowden gained the gloomy passage; and she quickened her steps to join the ladies

in order that no further suspicions might be excited by her absence. Alice Dunscombe was already proceeding to the dining-parlor, as Katherine passed through the door of the drawing-room; but Miss Howard had loitered behind, and was met by her cousin alone.

"You have then been so daring as to venture, Katherine!" exclaimed Cecilia.

"I have," returned the other, throwing herself into a chair, to recover her agitation—"I have, Cecilia; and I have met Barnstable, who will soon be in the Abbey, and its master."

The blood which had rushed to the face of Cecilia on first seeing her cousin, now retreated to her heart, leaving every part of her fine countenance of the whiteness of her polished temples, as she said:

"And we are to have a night of blood!"

"We are to have a night of freedom, Miss Howard; freedom to you, and to me; to Andrew Merry, to Griffith, and to his companion!"

"What freedom more than we now enjoy, Katherine, is needed by two young women? Think you I can remain silent, and see my uncle betrayed before my eyes?—his life perhaps endangered!"

"Your own life and person will not be held more sacred, Cecilia Howard, than that of your uncle. If you will condemn Griffith to a prison, and perhaps to a gibbet, betray Barnstable, as you have threatened—an opportunity will not be wanting at the supper-table, whither I shall lead the way, since the mistress of the house appears to forget her duty."

Katherine arose, and with a firm step and proud eye she moved along the gallery to the room where their presence was expected by the rest of the family. Cecilia followed in silence, and the whole party immediately took their several places at the board.

The first few minutes were passed in the usual attentions of the gentlemen to the ladies, and the ordinary civilities of the table; during which Katherine had so far regained the equanimity of her feelings as to commence a watchful scrutiny of the manners and looks of her guardian and Borroughcliffe, in which she determined to persevere until the eventful hour when she was to expect Barnstable should arrive. Colonel Howard, had, however, so far got the command of himself as no longer to betray his former abstraction. In its place, Katherine fancied, at moments, that she could discover a settled look of conscious security, mingled a little with an expression of severe determination; such as, in her earlier days, she had learned to dread as sure indications of the indignant but upright justice of an honorable mind. Borroughcliffe, on the other hand, was cool, polite, and as attentive to the viands as usual, with the alarming exception of discovering much less devotion to the Pride of the Vineyards than he commonly manifested on such occasions. In this manner the meal passed by and the cloth was removed, though the ladies appeared willing to retain their places longer than was customary. Colonel Howard, filling up the glasses of Alice Dunscombe and himself, passed the bottle to the recruiting-officer, and, with a sort of effort that was intended to rouse the dormant cheerfulness of his guests, cried:

"Come, Borroughcliffe, the ruby lips of your neighbors would be still more beautiful were they moistened with this rich cordial, and that, too, accompanied by some loyal sentiment.—Miss Alice is ever ready to express her fealty to her sovereign; in her name I can give the health of his most sacred majesty, with defeat and death to all traitors!"

"If the prayers of an humble subject, and one of a sex that has but little need to mingle in the turmoil of the world, and that has less right to pretend to understand the subleties of statesmen, can much avail a high and mighty prince like him who sits on the throne, then will he never know temporal evil," returned Alice, meekly; "but I cannot wish death to any one, not even to my enemies, if any I have, and much less to a people who are the children of the same family with myself."

"Children of the same family!" the colonel repeated, slowly, and with a bitterness of manner that did not fail to attract the painful interest of Katherine—"chil-

dren of the same family! Ay! even as Absalom was the child of David, or as Judas was of the family of the holy apostles! But let it pass unpledged—let it pass. The accursed spirit of rebellion has invaded my dwelling and I no longer know where to find one of my household that has not been assailed by its malign influence!"

"Assailed I may have been among others," returned Alice; "but not corrupted, if purity, in this instance, consists in loyalty——"

"What sound is that?" interrupted the colonel, with startling suddenness. "Was it not the crash of some violence, Captain Borroughcliffe?"

"It may have been one of my rascals who has met with a downfall in passing from the festive board—where, you know, I regale them to-night, in honor of our success—to his blanket," returned the captain, with admirable indifference; "or it may be the very spirit of whom you have spoken so freely, my host, that has taken umbrage at your remarks, and is passing from the hospitable walls of St. Ruth into the open air, without submitting to the small trouble of ascertaining the position of doors. In the latter case there may be some dozen perches or so of wall to replace in the morning."

The colonel, who had risen, glanced his eyes uneasily from the speaker to the door, and was evidently but little disposed to enter into the pleasantry of his guest.

"There are unusual noises, Captain Borroughcliffe, in the grounds of the Abbey, if not in the building itself," he said, advancing, with a fine military air, from the table to the center of the room, "and, as master of the mansion, I will inquire who it is that thus unseasonably disturbs these domains. If as friends, they shall have welcome, though their visit be unexpected; and if enemies, they shall also meet with such a reception as will become an old soldier!"

"No, no," cried Cecilia, entirely thrown off her guard by the manner and language of the veteran, and rushing into his arms. "Go not out, my uncle; go not into the terrible fray, my kind, my good uncle! You are old, you have already done more than your duty; why should you be exposed to danger?"

"The girl is mad with terror, Borroughcliffe," cried the colonel, bending his glistening eyes fondly on his niece, "and you will have to furnish my good-for-nothing, gouty old person with a corporal's guard to watch my night-cap, or the silly child will have an uneasy pillow till the sun rises once more. But you do not stir, sir?"

"Why should I?" cried the captain; "Miss Plowden yet deigns to keep me company, and it is not in the nature of the ——th to desert his bottle and his standard at the same moment. For, to a true soldier, the smiles of a lady are as imposing in the parlor as the presence of his colors in the field."

"I continue undisturbed, Captain Borroughcliffe," said Katherine, "because I have not been an inhabitant for so many months of St. Ruth, and not learned to know the tunes which the wind can play among its chimneys and pointed roofs. The noise which has taken Colonel Howard from his seat, and which has so unnecessarily alarmed my cousin Cicely, is nothing but the Æolian harp of the Abbey sounding a double bass."

The captain fastened on her composed countenance, while she was speaking, a look of open admiration, that brought, though tardily, the color more deeply to her cheeks; and he answered with something extremely equivocal, both in his emphasis and his air:

"I have avowed my allegiance, and I will abide by it. So long as Miss Plowden will deign to bestow her company, so long will she find me among her most faithful and persevering attendants, come who may, or what will."

"You compel me to retire," returned Katherine, rising, "whatever may have been my gracious intentions in the matter, for even female vanity must crimson at an adoration so profound as that which can chain Captain Borroughcliffe to a supper-table!—As your alarm has now dissipated, my cousin, will you lead the way? Miss Alice and myself attend you."

"But not into the paddock, surely, Miss Plowden," said the captain; "the door, the key of which you have just turned, communicates with the vestibule. This is the passage to the drawing-room."

The lady faintly laughed, as if in derision of her own forgetfulness, while she bowed her acknowledgment, and moved toward the proper passage. She observed:

"The madness of fear has assailed some, I believe, who have been able to affect a better disguise than Miss Howard."

"Is it the fear of present danger, or of that which is in reserve?" asked the captain; "but, as you have stipulated so generously in behalf of my worthy host here, and of one also who shall be nameless, because he has not deserved such a favor at your hands, your safety shall be one of my especial duties in these times of peril."

"There is peril, then!" exclaimed Cecilia; "your looks announce it, Captain Borroughcliffe! The changing countenance of my cousin tells me that my fears are too true!"

The soldier had now risen also, and, casting aside the air of badinage, which he so much delighted in, he came forward into the centre of the apartment, with the manner of one who felt it was time to be serious.

"A soldier is ever in peril when the enemies of his king are at hand, Miss Howard," he answered; "and that such is now the case Miss Plowden can testify, if she will. But you are the allies of both parties—retire, then, to your own apartments, and await the result of the struggle which is at hand."

"You speak of danger and hidden perils," said Alice Dunscombe; "know ye aught that justifies your fears?"

"I know all," Borroughcliffe coolly replied.

"All!" exclaimed Katherine.

"All!" echoed Alice, in tones of horror. "If, then, you know all, you must know his desperate courage and powerful hand, when opposed—yield in quiet, and he will not harm ye. Believe me, believe one who knows his very nature, that no lamb can be more gentle than he would be with unresisting women; nor any lion more fierce with his enemies!"

"As we happen not to be of the feminine gender," returned Borroughcliffe, with an air somewhat splenetic, "we must abide the fury of the king of beasts. His paw is, even now, at the outer door; and, if my orders have been obeyed, his entrance will be yet easier than that of the wolf to the respectable female ancestor of the little Red Riding-hood."

"Stay your hand for one single moment!" said Katherine, breathless, with interest; "you are the master of my secret, Captain Borroughcliffe, and bloodshed may be the consequence. I can yet go forward, and, perhaps, save many inestimable lives. Pledge to me your honor that they who came hither as your enemies, this night, shall depart in peace, and I will pledge to you my life for the safety of the Abbey."

"Oh, hear her, and shed not human blood!" cried Cecilia.

A loud crash interrupted further speech, and the sounds of heavy footsteps were heard in the adjoining room, as if many men were alighting on its floor, in quick succession. Borroughcliffe drew back with great coolness to the opposite side of the large apartment, and took a sheathed sword from the table, where it had been placed; at the same moment the door was burst open, and Barnstable entered alone, but heavily armed.

"You are my prisoners, gentlemen," said the sailor, as he advanced; "resistance is useless, and without it you shall receive favor. Ha! Miss Plowden, my advice was that you should not be present at this scene."

"Barnstable, we are betrayed!" cried the agitated Katherine. "But it is not yet too late. Blood has not yet been spilt, and you can retire, without that dreadful alternative, with honor. Go, then, delay not another moment; for should the soldiers of Captain Borroughcliffe come to the rescue of their commander, the Abbey would be a scene of horror!"

"Go you away; go, Katherine," said her lover, with impatience; "this is no

place for such as you. But Captain Borroughcliffe, if such be your name, you must perceive that resistance is in vain. I have ten good pikes in this outer room, in twenty better hands, and it will be madness to fight against such odds."

"Show me your strength," said the captain, "that I may take counsel with mine honor."

"Your honor shall be appeased, my brave soldier, for such is your bearing, though your livery is my aversion, and your cause most unholy! Heave ahead, boys! but hold your hands for orders."

The party of fierce-looking sailors whom Barnstable led, on receiving this order, rushed into the room in a medley, but, notwithstanding the surly glances and savage characters of their dress and equipments, they struck no blow, nor committed any act of hostility. The ladies shrank back appalled, as this terrific little band took possession of the hall; and even Borroughcliffe was seen to fall back toward a door, which, in some measure, covered his retreat.

The confusion of this sudden movement had not yet subsided, when sounds of strife were heard rapidly approaching from a distant part of the building, and presently one of the numerous doors of the apartment was violently opened, when two of the garrison of the Abbey rushed into the hall, vigorously pressed by twice their number of seamen, seconded by Griffith, Manual and Merry, who were armed with such weapons of offense as had presented themselves to their hands at their unexpected liberation. There was a movement on the part of the seamen, who were already in possession of the room, that threatened instant death to the fugitives; but Barnstable beat down their spikes with his sword, and sternly ordered them to fall back. Surprise produced the same pacific result among the combatants; and as the soldiers hastily sought a refuge behind their own officers, and the released captives, with their liberators, joined the body of their friends, the quiet of the hall, which had been so rudely interrupted, was soon restored.

"You see, sir," said Barnstable, after grasping the hands of Griffith and Manual in a warm and cordial pressure, "that all my plans have succeeded. Your sleeping guard are closely watched in their barracks by one party; our officers are released and your sentinels cut off by another; while, with a third, I hold the center of the Abbey, and am, substantially, in possession of your own person. In consideration, therefore, of what is due to humanity, and to the presence of these ladies, let there be no struggle! I shall impose no difficult terms, nor any long imprisonment."

The recruiting-officer manifested a composure throughout the whole scene that would have excited some uneasiness in his invaders had there been opportunity for minute observation; but his countenance now gradually assumed an appearance of anxiety, and his head was frequently turned, as if listening for further and more important interruptions. He answered, however, to this appeal with his ordinary deliberation:

"You speak of conquests, sir, before they are achieved. My venerable host and myself are not so defenseless as you may choose to imagine." While speaking he threw aside the cloth of a side-table, from beneath which the colonel and himself were instantly armed with a brace of pistols each. "Here are the death-warrants of four of your party, and these brave fellows at my back can account for two more. I believe, my transatlantic warrior, that we are now something in the condition of Cortes and the Mexicans, when the former overran part of your continent — I being Cortes, armed with artificial thunder and lighting, and you the Indians, with nothing but pikes and slings, and such other antediluvian inventions. Shipwrecks and sea water are fatal dampers of gunpowder?"

"That we are unprovided with fire-arms I will not deny," said Barnstable; "but we are men who are used, from infancy, to depend on our good right arms for life and safety, and we know how to use them, though we should even grapple with death! As for the trifles in your hands, gentlemen, you are not to suppose that

men who are trained to look in at one end of a thirty-two pounder, loaded with grape, while the match is put to the other, will so much as wink at their report, though you fired them by fifties. What say you, boys, is a pistol a weapon to repel boarders?"

The discordant and disdainful laughs that burst from the restrained seamen were a sufficient pledge of their indifference to so trifling a danger. Borroughcliffe noted their hardened boldness, and taking the supper-bell, which was lying near him, he rang it for a minute, with great violence. The heavy tread of trained footsteps soon followed this extraordinary summons; and presently the several doors of the apartment were opened, and filled with armed soldiers, wearing the livery of the English crown.

"If you hold these smaller weapons in such vast contempt," said the recruiting-officer, when he perceived that his men had possessed themselves of all the avenues, "it is in my power to try the virtue of some more formidable. After this exhibition of strength, gentlemen, I presume you cannot hesitate to submit as prisoners of war."

The seamen had been formed in something like military array by the assiduity of Manual, during the preceding dialogue; and, as the different doors had discovered fresh accessions to the strength of the enemy, the marine industriously offered new fronts, the small party was completely arranged in a hollow square that might have proved formidable in a charge, bristled as it was with the deadly pikes of the *Ariel*.

"Here has been some mistake," said Griffith, after glancing his eye at the formidable array of the soldiers; "I take precedence of Mr. Barnstable, and I shall propose to you, Captain Borroughcliffe, terms that may remove this scene of strife from the dwelling of Colonel Howard."

"The dwelling of Colonel Howard," cried the veteran, "is the dwelling of his king, or of the meanest servant of the crown! So, Borroughcliffe, spare not the traitors on my behalf; accept no other terms than such unconditional submission as is meet to exact from the rebellious subjects of the anointed of the Lord."

While Griffith spoke, Barnstable folded his arms in affected composure, and glanced his eyes expressively at the shivering Katherine, who, with her companions, still continued agitated spectators of all that passed, chained to the spot by their apprehensions; but to this formidable denunciation of the master of the Abbey he deemed proper to reply:

"Now, by every hope I have of sleeping again on salt water, old gentleman, if it were not for the presence of these three trembling females, I should feel tempted to dispute, at once, the title of his majesty. You may make such a covenant as you will with Mr. Griffith, but, if it contain one syllable about submission to your king, or of any other allegiance than that which I owe to the Continental Congress and the State of Massachusetts, you may as well consider the terms violated at once; for not an article of such agreement will I consider as binding on me, or on any that shall choose to follow me as leader."

"Here are but two leaders, Mr. Barnstable," interrupted the haughty Griffith; "the one of the enemy, and the other of the arms of America—Captain Borroughcliffe, to you, as the former, I address myself. The great objects of the contest which now unhappily divides England from her ancient colonies, can be, in no degree, affected by the events of this night; while, on the other hand, by a rigid adherence to military notions, much private evil and deep domestic calamity must follow any struggle in such a place. We have but to speak, sir, and these rude men, who already stand impatiently handling their instruments of death, will aim them at each other's lives; and who can say that he shall be able to stay their hands when and where he will? I know you to be a soldier, and that you are not yet to learn how much easier it is to stimulate to blood than to glut vengeance."

Borroughcliffe, unused to the admission of violent emotions, and secure in the superiority of his own party, both in num-

bers and equipments, heard him with the coolest composure to the end, and then answered in his customary manner:

"I honor your logic, sir. Your premises are indisputable, and the conclusion most obvious. Commit, then, these worthy tars to the good keeping of honest Drill, who will see their famished natures revived by divers eatables, and a due proportion of suitable fluids; while we can discuss the manner in which you are to return to the colonies around a bottle of liquor, which my friend Manual there assures me has come from the sunny side of the island Madeira, to be drunk in a bleak corner of that of Britain. By my palate! but the rascals brighten at the thought. They know by instinct, sir, that a shipwrecked mariner is a fitter companion to a ration of beef and a pot of porter than to such unsightly things as bayonets and boarding-pikes!"

"Trifle not unseasonably?" exclaimed the impatient young sailor. "You have the odds in numbers, but whether it will avail you much in a deadly struggle of hand to hand is a question you must put to your prudence: we stand not here to ask terms, but to grant them. You must be brief, sir; for the time is wasting while we delay."

"I have offered to you the means of obtaining, in perfection, the enjoyment of the three most ancient of the numerous family of the arts—eating, drinking, and sleeping! What more do you require?"

"That you order these men, who fill the pass to the outer door, to fall back and give us room. I would take, in peace, these armed men from before the eyes of those who are unused to such sights. Before you oppose this demand, think how easily these hardy fellows could make a way for themselves against your divided force."

"Your companion, the experienced Captain Manual, will tell you that such a maneuver would be very unmilitary with a superior body in your rear!"

"I have not leisure, sir, for this folly," cried the indignant Griffith. "Do you refuse us an unmolested retreat from the Abbey?"

"I do."

Griffith turned, with a look of extreme emotion to the ladies, and beckoned to them to retire, unable to give utterance to his wishes in words. After a moment of deep silence, however, he once more addressed Borroughcliffe in the tones of conciliation:

"If Manual and myself will return to our prisons, and submit to the will of your government," he said, "can the rest of the party return to the frigate unmolested?"

"They cannot," replied the soldier, who, perceiving that the crisis approached, was gradually losing his artificial deportment in the interest of the moment. "You, and all others who willingly invade the peace of these realms, must abide the issue!"

"Then God protect the innocent and defend the right!"

"Amen!"

"Give way, villains!" cried Griffith, facing the party that held the outer door—"give way, or you shall be riddled with our pikes!"

"Show them your muzzles, men!" shouted Borroughcliffe; "but pull no trigger till they advance."

There was an instant of bustle and preparation, in which the rattling of firearms blended with the suppressed execrations and threats of the intended combatants; and Cecilia and Katherine had both covered their faces to veil the horrid sight that was momentarily expected, when Alice Dunscombe advanced boldly between the points of the threatening weapons, and spoke in a voice that stayed the hands that were already uplifted:

"Hear me, men! if men ye be, and not demons thirsting for each other's blood; though ye walk abroad in the semblance of Him who died that ye might be elevated to the rank of angels? Call ye this war? Is this the glory that is made to warm the hearts of even silly and confiding women? Is the peace of families to be destroyed to gratify your wicked lust for conquest; and is life to be taken in vain, in order that ye may boast of the foul deed in your wicked revels? Fall

back, then, ye British soldiers! if ye be worthy of that name, and give passage to a woman; and remember that the first shot that is fired will be buried in her bosom!"

The men, thus enjoined, shrank before her commanding mien, and a way was made for her exit through the very door which Griffith had in vain solicited might be cleared for himself and party. But Alice, instead of advancing, appeared to have suddenly lost the use of those faculties which had already effected so much. Her figure seemed rooted to the spot where she had spoken, and her eyes were fixed in a settled gaze, as if dwelling on some horrid object. While she yet stood in this attitude of unconscious helplessness, the doorway became again darkened, and the figure of the pilot was seen on its threshhold, clad, as usual, in the humble vestments of his profession, but heavily armed with the weapons of naval war. For an instant he stood a silent spectator of the scene; and then advanced calmly, but, with searching eyes, into the center of the apartment.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"*Don Pedro.*—Welcome, signior; you are almost come to part almost a fray."—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

"DOWN with your arms, you Englishmen!" said the daring intruder; "and you, who fight in the cause of sacred liberty, stay your hands, that no unnecessary blood may flow! Yield yourself, proud Briton, to the power of the thirteen republics!"

"Ha!" exclaimed Borroughcliffe, grasping a pistol, with an air of great resolution, "the work thickens—I had not included this man in my estimate of their numbers. Is he a Samson, that his single arm can change the face of things so suddenly? Down with your own weapon, you masquerader! or, at the report of this pistol, your body shall be made a target for twenty bullets!"

"And thirty for a hundred!" returned the pilot. "Without there! Wind your call, fellow, and bring in our numbers! We will let this confident gentleman feel his weakness."

He had not done speaking, before the shrill whistle of a boatswain rose gradually on the ears of the listeners, until the sense of hearing became painfully oppressed by the piercing sounds that rang under the arched roof of the hall, and penetrated even to the most distant recesses of the Abbey. A tremendous rush of men followed, who drove in before them the terrified fragment of Borroughcliffe's command, that had held the vestibule; and the outer room became filled with a dark mass of human bodies.

"Let them hear ye, lads," cried the leader; "the Abbey is your own!"

The roaring of a tempest was not louder than the shout that burst from his followers, who continued their cheers, peal on peal, until the very roof of the edifice appeared to tremble with their vibrations. Numerous dark and shaggy heads were seen moving around the passage; some cased in the iron-bound caps of the frigate's boarders, and others glittering with the brazen ornaments of her marine guard. The sight of the latter did not fail to attract the eye of Manual, who rushed among the throng, and soon reappeared, followed by a trusty band of his own men, who took possession of the post held by the soldiers of Borroughcliffe, while the dialogue was continued between the leaders of the adverse parties.

Thus far Colonel Howard had yielded to his guest, with a deep reverence for the principles of military subordination, the functions of a commander; but, now that affairs appeared to change so materially, he took on himself the right to question these intruders into his dwelling

"By what authority, sir," the colonel demanded, "is it that you dare thus to invade the castle of a subject of this realm? Do you come backed by the commission of the lord-lieutenant of the county, or has your warrant the signature of his majesty's secretary for the home department?"

"I bear no commission from any quarter," returned the pilot; "I rank only an

humble follower of the friends of America; and, having led these gentlemen into danger, I have thought it my duty to see them extricated. They are now safe; and the right to command all that hear me rests with Mr. Griffith, who is commissioned by the Continental Congress for such service."

When he had spoken, he fell back from the position he occupied in the center of the room to one of its sides, where, leaning his body against the wainscot, he stood a silent observer of what followed.

"It appears, then, that it is to you, degenerate son of a most worthy father, that I must repeat my demand," continued the veteran. "By what right is my dwelling thus rudely assailed! and why is my quiet and the peace of those I protect so daringly violated?"

"I might answer you, Colonel Howard, by saying that it is according to the laws of arms, or rather in retaliation for the thousand evils that your English troops have inflicted between Maine and Georgia; but I wish not to increase the unpleasant character of this scene, and I therefore will tell you that our advantage shall be used with moderation. The instant that our men can be collected, and our prisoners properly secured, your dwelling shall be restored to your authority. We are no freebooters, sir; and you will find it so after our departure.—Captain Manual, draw off your guard into the grounds, and make your dispositions for a return-march to our boats.—Let the boarders fall back, there! Out with ye! out with ye—tumble out, you boarders!"

The amicable order of the young lieutenant, which was delivered after the stern, quick fashion of his profession, operated on the cluster of dark figures that were grouped around the door like a charm; and as the men whom Barnstable had led followed their shipmates into the courtyard, the room was now left to such only as might be termed the gentlemen of the invading party, and the family of Colonel Howard.

Barnstable had continued silent since his senior officer had assumed command, listening most attentively to each syllable that fell from either side; but now that so few remained, and the time pressed, he spoke again:

"If we are to take boat so soon, Mr. Griffith, it would be seemly that due preparations should be made to receive the ladies, who are to honor us with their presence: shall I take that duty on myself?"

The abrupt proposal produced a universal surprise in his hearers; though the abashed and conscious expression of Katherine Plowden's features sufficiently indicated that to her, at least, it was not altogether unexpected. The long silence that succeeded the question was interrupted by Colonel Howard.

"Ye are masters, gentlemen; help yourselves to whatever best suits your inclinations. My dwelling, my goods, and my wards are alike at your disposal, or perhaps, Miss Alice here, good and kind Miss Alice Dunscombe, may suit the taste of some among ye!—Ah! Edward Griffith! Edward Griffith! little did I ever——"

"Breathe not that name in levity again, thou scoffer, or even your years may prove a feeble protection!" said a stern, startling voice from behind. All eyes turned involuntarily at the unexpected sounds, and the muscular form of the pilot was seen resuming its attitude of repose against the wall, though every fiber of his frame was working with suppressed passion.

When the astonished looks of Griffith ceased to dwell on this extraordinary exhibition of interest in his companion, they were turned imploringly toward the fair cousins, who still occupied the distant corner, whither fear had impelled them.

"I have said that we are not midnight marauders, Colonel Howard," he replied; "but if any there be here who will deign to commit themselves to our keeping, I trust it will not be necessary to say, at this hour, what will be their reception."

"We have not time for unnecessary compliments," cried the impatient Barnstable; "here is Merry, who by years and blood is a suitable assistant for them in arranging their little baggage.—What

say you, urchin, can you play the lady's-maid on emergency?"

"Ay, sir, and better than I acted the pedler-boy," cried the gay youngster. "To have my merry cousin Kate and my good cousin Cecily for shipmates, I could play our common grandmother!—Come, coz, let us be moving; you will have to allow a little leeway in time, for my awkwardness."

"Stand back, young man," said Miss Howard, repulsing his familiar attempt to take her arm; and then advancing, with a maidenly dignity, nigher to her guardian, she continued: "I cannot know what stipulations have been agreed to by my cousin Plowden, in the secret treaty she has made this night with Mr. Barnstable; this for myself, Colonel Howard—I would have you credit your brother's child when she says that to her the events of the hour have not been more unexpected than to yourself."

The veteran gazed at her for a moment with an expression of his eye that denoted reviving tenderness; but gloomy thoughts appeared to cross his mind again, and he shook his head as he walked proudly away.

"Nay, then," added Cecilia, her head dropping meekly on her bosom, "I may be discredited by my uncle, but I cannot be disgraced without some act of my own."

She slowly raised her mild countenance again, and, bending her eyes on her lover, she continued, while a rich rush of blood passed over her fine features.

"Edward Griffith, I will not, I cannot say how humiliating it is to think that you can for an instant believe I would again forget myself so much as to wish to desert him whom God has given me for a protector for one chosen by my own erring passions. And you, Andrew Merry, learn to respect the child of your mother's sister, if not for her own sake, at least for that of her who watched your cradle!"

"Here appears to be some mistake," said Barnstable, who participated, however, in no trifling degree in the embarrassment of the abashed boy; "but, like all other mistakes on such subjects, it can be explained away, I suppose. Mr. Griffith, it remains for you to speak—damn it, man," he whispered, "you are as dumb as a codfish! I am sure so fine a woman is worth a little fair-weather talk. You are muter than a four-footed beast—even an ass can bray!"

"We will hasten our departure, Mr. Barnstable," said Griffith, sighing heavily, and rousing himself as if from a trance. "These rude sights cannot but appall the ladies. You will please, sir, to direct the order of our march to the shore. Captain Manual has charge of our prisoners, who must all be secured, to answer for an equal number of our own countrymen."

"And our countrywomen!" said Barnstable, "are they to be forgotten, in the selfish recollection of our own security?"

"With them we have no right to interfere, unless at their request."

"By Heaven! Mr. Griffith, this may smack of learning," cried the other, "and it may plead bookish authority as its precedent; but let me tell you, sir, it savors but little of a sailor's love."

"Is it unworthy of a seaman, and a gentleman, to permit the woman he calls his mistress to be so, other than in name?"

"Well, then, Griff, I pity you, from my soul. I would rather have had a sharp struggle for the happiness that I shall now obtain so easily than that you should be thus cruelly disappointed. But you cannot blame me, my friend, that I avail myself of Fortune's favor. Miss Plowden, your fair hand. Colonel Howard, I return you a thousand thanks for the care you have taken, hitherto, of this precious charge; and believe me, sir, that I speak frankly, when I say that, next to myself, I should choose to intrust her with you in preference to any man on earth."

The colonel turned to the speaker, and bowed low, while he answered with grave courtesy:

"Sir, you repay my slight services with too much gratitude. If Miss Katherine Plowden has not become under my guardianship all that her good father, Captain John Plowden, of the Royal Navy, could have wished a daughter of his to be, the

fault unquestionably is to be attributed to my inability to instruct and to no inherent quality in the young lady herself. I will not say, 'Take her, sir,' since you have her in your possession already, and it would be out of my power to alter the arrangement; therefore I can only wish that you may find her as dutiful as a wife as she has been, hitherto, as a ward and a subject."

Katherine had yielded her hand, passively, to her lover, and suffered him to lead her more into the circle than she had before been; but now she threw off his arm, and shaking aside the dark curls which she had invited to fall in disorder around her brow, she raised her face and looked proudly up, with an eye that sparkled with the spirit of its mistress, and a face that grew pale with emotion at each moment as she proceeded:

"Gentlemen, the one may be as ready to receive as the other is to reject; but has the daughter of John Plowden no voice in this cool disposal of her person? If her guardian tires of her presence, other habitations may be found, without inflicting so severe a penalty on this gentleman as to compel him to provide for her accommodation in a vessel that must be already straitened for room!"

She turned and rejoined her cousin with such an air of maidenly resentment as a young woman would be apt to discover who found herself the subject of matrimonial arrangement, without her own feelings being at all consulted. Barnstable, who knew but little of the windings of the female heart, or how necessary to his mistress, notwithstanding her previous declarations, the countenance of Cecilia was to any decided and open act in his favor, stood in stupid wonder at her declaration. He could not conceive that a woman who had already ventured so much in secret in his behalf, and who had so often avowed her weakness, should shrink to declare it again at such a crisis, though the eyes of the universe were on her! He looked from one of the party to the other, and met in every face an expression of delicate reserve, except in those of the guardian of his mistress and of Borroughcliffe.

The colonel had given a glance of returning favor at her, whom he now conceived to be his repentant ward, while the countenance of the entrapped captain exhibited a look of droll surprise, blended with the expression of bitter ferocity it had manifested since the discovery of his own mishap.

"Perhaps, sir," said Barnstable, addressing the latter fiercely, "you see something amusing about the person of this lady, to divert you thus unseasonably. We tolerate no such treatment of our women in America!"

"Nor do we quarrel before ours in England," returned the soldier, throwing back the fierce glance of the sailor, with interest; "but I was thinking of the revolutions time can produce; nothing more, I do assure you. It is not half an hour since I thought myself a most happy fellow; secure in my plans for overreaching the scheme you had laid to surprise me; and now I am as miserable a dog as wears a single epaulet, and has no hope of seeing its fellow."

"And in what manner, sir, can this sudden change apply to me?" asked Katherine, with all her spirit.

"Certainly not to your perseverance in the project to assist my enemies, madame," returned the soldier with affected humility; "nor to your zeal for their success, or your consummate coolness at the supper-table! But I find it is time that I should be superannuated—I can no longer serve my king with credit, and should take to serving my God, like all other worn-out men of the world! My hearing is surely defective, or a paddock wall has a most magical effect in determining sounds!"

Katherine waited not to hear the close of this sentence, but walked to a distant part of the room to conceal the burning blushes that covered her countenance. The manner in which the plans of Barnstable had become known to his foe was no longer a mystery. Her conscience also reproached her a little with some unnecessary coquetry, as she remembered that quite one-half of the dialogue between her lover and herself, under the

shadow of that very wall to which Borroughcliffe alluded, had been on a subject altogether foreign to contention and tumults. As the feelings of Barnstable were by no means so sensitive as those of his mistress, and his thoughts much occupied with the means of obtaining his object, he did not so readily comprehend the indirect allusion of the soldier, but turned abruptly away to Griffith, and observed with a serious air:

"I feel it my duty, Mr. Griffith, to suggest that we have standing instructions to secure all the enemies of America, wherever they may be found, and to remind you that the States have not hesitated to make prisoners of females in many instances."

"Bravo!" cried Burroughcliffe; "if the ladies will not go as your mistresses, take them as your captives!"

"'Tis well for you, sir, that you are a captive yourself, or you should be made to answer for this speech," retorted the irritated Barnstable.—"It is a responsible command, Mr. Griffith, and must not be disregarded."

"To your duty, Mr. Barnstable," said Griffith, again arousing from deep abstraction; "you have your orders, sir; let them be executed promptly."

"I have also the orders of our common superior, Captain Munson, Mr. Griffith; and I do assure you, sir, that in making out my instructions for the *Ariel*—poor thing! there are no two of her timbers hanging together—but my instructions were decided particular on that head."

"And my orders now supersede them."

"But am I justifiable in obeying a verbal order from an inferior, in direct opposition to a written instruction?"

Griffith had hitherto manifested in his deportment nothing more than a cold determination to act, but the blood now flew to every vessel in his cheeks and forehead, and his dark eyes flashed fire, as he cried authoritatively:

"How sir! do you hesitate to obey?"

"By Heaven, sir, I would dispute the command of the Continental Congress itself, should they bid me so far to forget my duty to—to——"

"Add yourself, sir!—Mr. Barnstable, let this be the last of it. To your duty, sir!"

"My duty calls me here, Mr. Griffith."

"I must act, then, or be bearded by my own officers. Mr. Merry, direct Captain Manual to send in a sergeant and a file of marines."

"Bid him come on, himself!" cried Barnstable, maddened to desperation by his disappointment; "'tis not his whole corps that can disarm me—let them come on!—Here, there, you Ariels! rally around your captain!"

"The man among them who dares to cross that threshold without my order, dies!" cried Griffith, menacing with a naked hanger the seamen who had promptly advanced at the call of their old commander. "Yield your sword, Mr. Barnstable, and spare yourself the disgrace of having it forced from you by a common soldier."

"Let me see the dog who dare attempt it!" exclaimed Barnstable, flourishing his weapon in fierce anger. Griffith had extended his own arm in the earnestness of his feelings, and their hangers crossed each other. The clashing of the steel operated on both like the sound of the clarion on a war-horse, and there were sudden and rapid blows, and as rapid parries, exchanged between the flashing weapons.

"Barnstable! Barnstable!" cried Katherine, rushing into his arms, "I will go with you to the ends of the earth!"

Cecilia Howard did not speak; but when Griffith recovered his coolness, he beheld her beautiful form kneeling at his feet, with her pale face bent imploringly on his own disturbed countenance. The cry of Miss Plowden had separated the combatants, before an opportunity for shedding blood had been afforded; but the young men exchanged looks of keen resentment, notwithstanding the interference of their mistresses. At this moment Colonel Howard advanced, and, raising his niece from her humble posture, said:

"This is not a situation for a child of Henry Howard, though he knelt in the

presence, and before the throne, of her sovereign. Behold, my dear Cecilia, the natural consequences of this rebellion! It scatters discord in their ranks, and, by its damnable leveling principles, destroys all distinction of rank among themselves; even these rash boys know not where obedience is due!"

"It is due to me," said the pilot, who now stepped forward among the agitated group, "and it is time that I enforced it.—Mr. Griffith, sheathe your sword.—And you, sir, who have defied the authority of your senior officer, and have forgotten the obligation of your oath, submit, and return to your duty."

Griffith started at the sounds of his calm voice, as if with sudden recollection; and then, bowing low, he returned the weapon to its scabbard. But Barnstable still encircled the waist of his mistress with one arm, while with the other he brandished his hanger, and laughed with scorn at this extraordinary assumption of authority.

"And who is this," he cried, "who dare give such an order to me?"

The eyes of the pilot flashed with a terrible fire, while a fierce glow seemed to be creeping over his whole frame, which actually quivered with passion. But, suppressing this exhibition of his feelings, by a sudden and powerful effort, he answered in an emphatic manner:

"One who has a right to order, and who *will* be obeyed!"

The extraordinary manner of the speaker contributed as much as his singular assertion to induce Barnstable, in his surprise, to lower the point of his weapon, with an air that might easily have been mistaken for submission. The pilot fastened his glowing eyes on him, for an instant, and then, turning to the rest of the listeners, he continued, more mildly:

"It is true that we came not here as marauders, and that our wish is to do no unnecessary acts of severity to the aged and the helpless. But this officer of the crown, and this truant American in particular, are fairly our prisoners; as such, they must be conducted on board our ship."

"But the main object of our expedition?" said Griffith.

"'Tis lost," returned the pilot, hastily —"'tis sacrificed to more private feelings; 'tis like a hundred others, ended in disappointment, and is forgotten, sir, forever. But the interests of the republics must not be neglected, Mr. Griffith. Though we are not madly to endanger the lives of those gallant fellows, to gain a love-smile from one young beauty, neither are we to forget the advantages they may have obtained for us, in order to procure one of approbation from another. This Colonel Howard will answer well in a bargain with the minions of the crown, and may purchase the freedom of some worthy patriot who is deserving of his liberty. Nay, nay, suppress that haughty look, and turn that proud eye on any, rather than me; he goes to the frigate, sir, and that immediately."

"Then," said Cecilia Howard, timidly approaching the spot where her uncle stood, a disdainful witness of the dissensions among his captors; "then will I go with him! He shall never be a resident among his enemies alone!"

"It would be more ingenuous and more worthy of my brother's daughter," said her uncle, coldly, "if she ascribed her willingness to depart to its proper motive." Disregarding the look of deep distress with which Cecilia received this mortifying rejection of her tender attention, the old man walked toward Borroughcliffe, who was gnawing the hilt of his sword, in very vexation at the downfall of his high-raised hopes, and placing himself by his side, with an air of infinitely dignified submission, he continued: "Act your pleasure on us, gentlemen; you are the conquerors and we must even submit. A brave man knows as well how to yield with decorum as to defend himself stoutly, when he is not surprised, as we have been. But if an opportunity should ever offer!—Act your pleasures, gentlemen; no two lambs were ever half so meek as Captain Borroughcliffe and myself."

The smile of affected but bitter resigna-

tion that the Colonel bestowed on his fellow prisoner was returned by that officer with an attempt at risibility that abundantly betokened the disturbed state of his feelings. The two, however, succeeded in so far maintaining appearances as to contemplate the succeeding movement of the conquerors with a sufficient degree of composure.

The colonel steadily and coldly rejected the advances of his niece, who bowed meekly to his will, and relinquished for the present, the hope of bringing him to a sense of his injustice. She, however, employed herself in earnest to give such directions as were necessary to enforce the resolution she had avowed, and in this unexpected employment she found both a ready and a willing assistant in her cousin. The latter, unknown to Miss Howard, had, in anticipation of some such event as the present, long since made, in secret, all those preparations which might become necessary to a sudden flight from the Abbey. In conjunction with her lover, then, who, perceiving that the plan of the pilot was furthering his own views, deemed it most wise to forget his quarrel with that mysterious individual, she flew to point out the means of securing those articles which were already in preparation. Barnstable and Merry accompanied her light steps among the narrow dark passages of the Abbey with the utmost delight; the former repeatedly apostrophizing her wit and beauty, and, indeed, all of her various merits, and the latter laughing and indulging those buoyant spirits that a boy of his years and reflection might be supposed to feel even in such a scene. It was fortunate for her cousin that Katherine had possessed so much forethought; for the attention of Cecilia Howard was directed much more to the comforts of her uncle than to those which were necessary for herself. Attended by Alice Dunscombe, the young mistress of St. Ruth moved through the solitary apartments of the building, listening to the mild religious consolation of her companion, in silence, at times yielding to those bursts of mortified feeling that she could not repress, or again as calmly giving her orders to her maids as if the intended movement was one of but ordinary interest. All this time the party in the dining-hall remained stationary.

The pilot, as if satisfied with what he had already done, sank back to his reclining attitude against the wall, though his eyes keenly watched every movement of the preparations in a manner which denoted that his was the master-spirit that directed the whole. Griffith, had, however, resumed, in appearance, the command, and the busy seamen addressed themselves for orders to him alone. In this manner an hour was consumed, when Cecilia and Katherine appearing in succession attired in a suitable manner for their departure, and the baggage of the whole party having been already intrusted to a petty officer and a party of his men, Griffith gave forth the customary order to put the whole in motion. The shrill, piercing whistle of the boatswain once more rang among the galleries and ceilings of the Abbey, and was followed by the deep hoarse cry of:

"Away, there, you shore-draft! away, there, you boarders! ahead, heave ahead, sea-dogs!"

This extraordinary summons was succeeded by the roll of a drum, and the strains of a fife, from without, when the whole party moved from the building in the order that had been previously prescribed by Captain Manual, who acted as the marshal of the forces on the occasion.

The pilot had conducted his surprise with so much skill and secrecy as to have secured every individual about the Abbey, whether male or female, soldier or civilian; and as it might be dangerous to leave any behind who could convey intelligence into the country, Griffith had ordered that every human being found in the building should be conducted to the cliffs; to be held in durance at least until the departure of the last boat to the cutter, which, he was informed, lay close in to the land, awaiting their re-embarkation. The hurry of the departure had caused many lights to be kindled in the Abbey, and the contrast betwen the glare within and the gloom without attracted the wandering

looks of the captives, as they issued into the paddock. One of those indefinable and unaccountable feelings which so often cross the human mind, induced Cecilia to pause at the great gate of the grounds, and look back at the Abbey, with a presentiment that she was to behold it for the last time. The dark and ragged outline of the edifice was clearly delineated against the northern sky, while the open windows and neglected doors permitted a view of the solitude within. Twenty tapers were shedding their useless light in the empty apartments, as if in mockery of the deserted walls; and Cecilia turned shuddering from the sight, to press nigher to the person of her indignant uncle, with a secret impression that her presence would soon be more necessary than ever to his happiness.

The low hum of voices in front, with the occasional strains of the fife, and the stern mandates of the sea-officers soon recalled her, however, from these visionary thoughts to the surrounding realities, while the whole party pursued their way with diligence to the margin of the ocean.

CHAPTER XXX.

"A chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Cries, 'Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry.'"
—LORD ULLIN'S DAUGHTER.

THE sky had been without a cloud during the day, the gale having been dry and piercing, and thousands of stars were now shining through a chill atmosphere. As the eye, therefore, became accustomed to the change of light, it obtained a more distinct view of surrounding objects. At the head of the line that was stretched along the narrow pathway marched a platoon of the marines, who maintained the regular and steady front of trained warriors. They were followed at some little distance by a large and confused body of seamen, heavily armed, whose disposition to disorder and rude merriment, which became more violent from their treading on solid ground, was with difficulty restrained by the presence and severe rebukes of their own officers. In the center of this confused mass, the whole of the common prisoners were placed, but were no otherwise attended to by their nautical guard than as they furnished the subjects of fun and numberless quaint jokes. At some distance in their rear marched Colonel Howard and Borroughcliffe, arm-in-arm, both maintaining the most rigid and dignified silence, though under the influence of very bitter feelings.

Behind these again, and pressing as nigh as possible to her uncle, was Miss Howard, leaning on the arm of Alice Dunscombe, and surrounded by the female domestics of the establishment of St. Ruth. Katherine Plowden moved lightly, by herself, in the shadow of this group, with elastic steps, but with a maiden coyness that taught her to veil her satisfaction with the semblance of captivity. Barnstable watched her movements with delight, within six feet of her, but submitted to the air of caprice in his mistress, which seemed to require that he should come no nearer. Griffith, avoiding the direct line of the party, walked on its skirts in such a situation that his eye could command its whole extent, in order, if necessary, to direct the movements. Another body of the marines marched at the close of the procession, and Manual, in person, brought up the rear. The music had ceased by command, and nothing was now audible but the regular tread of the soldiers, with the sighs of the dying gale, interrupted occasionally by the voice of an officer, or the hum of low dialogue.

"This has been a Scotch prize that we have taken," muttered a surly old seaman; "a ship without head-money or cargo! There was kitchen timber enough in the old jug of a place to have given an outfit in crockery and knee-buckles to every lad in the ship; but no! let a man's mouth water ever so much for food and raiment, damme, if the officers would give him leave to steal even so good a thing as a spare Bible."

"You may say all that, and then make but a short yarn of the truth," returned the messmate who walked by his side;

"if there had been such a thing as a ready-made prayer handy, they would have choused a poor fellow out of the use of it. I say, Ben, I'll tell ye what; it's my opinion, that if a chap is to turn soldier and carry a musket, he should have soldier's play, and leave to plunder a little—now the devil a thing have I laid my hands on to-night, except this firelock and my cutlass—unless you call this bit of a table-cloth something of a windfall."

"By! you have fallen in there with a fresh bolt of duck, I see!" said the other, in manifest admiration of the texture of his companion's prize: "why, it would spread as broad a clew as our mizzen-royal, if it was loosened! well, your luck hasn't been every man's luck—for my part, I think this here hat was made for some fellow's great toe; I've rigged it on my head both fore and aft, and athwart ships; but curse the inch can I drive it down. I say, Sam! you'll give us a shirt of that tablecloth?"

"Ay, ay, you can have one corner of it; or, for that matter, ye can take the full half, Nick; but I don't see that we go off to the ship any richer than we landed, unless you may muster she-cattle among your prize money."

"No richer!" interrupted a waggish young sailor, who had been hitherto a silent listener to the conversation between his older and more calculating shipmates; "I think we are set up for a cruise in them seas where the day watches last six months; don't you see we have caught a double allowance of midnight?"

While speaking, he laid his hands on the bare and woolly heads of Colonel Howard's two black slaves, who were moving near him, both occupied in mournful forebodings on the results that were to flow from this unexpected loss of their liberty. "Slue your faces this way, gentlemen," he added; "there; don't you think that a sight to put out the binnacle-lamps? there's darkness visible for ye!"

"Let the niggers alone," grumbled one of the more aged speakers; "and what are ye skylarking with the like of them for? the next thing they'll sing out, and then you'll hear one of the officers in your wake. For my part, Nick, I can't see why it is that we keep dodging alongshore here, with less than ten fathoms under us, when, by stretching into the broad Atlantic, we might fall in with a Jamaica-man every day or two, and have sugar-hogsheads and rum-puncheons as plenty aboard us as hard fare is now."

"It's all owing to that pilot," returned the other; "for, d'ye see, if there was no bottom, there would be no pilots. This is a dangerous cruising-ground, where we stretch into five fathoms, and then drop our lead on a sand-pit or a rock! Besides, they make night-work of it, too! If we had daylight for fourteen hours instead of seven, a man might trust to feeling his way for the other ten."

"Now, a'n't ye a couple of old horse marines!" again interrupted the young sailor; "don't you see that Congress wants us to cut up Johnny Bull's coasters and that old Blow-hard has found the days too short for his business, and so he has landed a party to get hold of night. Here we have him! and when we get off to the ship, we shall put him under hatches, and then you'll see the face of the sun again!—Come, my lilies! let these two gentlemen look into your cabin-windows—what? you won't! Then I must squeeze your woolen nightcaps for ye!"

The negroes, who had been submitting to his humors with the abject humility of slavery, now gave certain low intimations that they were suffering pain under the rough manipulation of their tormentor.

"What's that!" cried a stern voice, whose boyish tones seemed to mock the air of authority that was assumed by the speaker—"who's that, I say, raising that cry among ye?"

The willful young man slowly removed his two hands from the woolly polls of the slaves, but, as he suffered them to fall reluctantly along their sable temples, he gave the ear of one of the blacks a tweak that caused him to give vent to another cry, that was uttered with a much greater confidence of sympathy than before.

"Do ye hear, there!" repeated Merry — "who's skylarking with those negroes?"

"'Tis no one, sir," the sailor answered with affected gravity; "one of the pale-faces has hit his shin against a cobweb, and it has made his ear ache!"

"Harkye, you Mr. Jack Joker! how came you in the midst of the prisoners? did not I order you to handle your pike, sir, and to keep in the outer line?"

"Ay, ay, sir, you did; and I obeyed orders as long as I could; but these niggers have made the night so dark that I lost my way!"

A low laugh passed through the confused crowd of seamen; and even the midshipman might have been indulging himself in a similar manner at this specimen of quaint humor from the fellow, who was one of those licensed men that are to be found in every ship. At length:

"Well, sir," he said, "you have found out your false reckoning now, so get you back to the place where I bade you stay."

"Ay, ay, sir, I'm going. By all the blunders in the purser's book, Mr. Merry, but that cobweb has made one of these niggers shed tears! Do let me stay to catch a little ink, sir, to write a letter with to my poor old mother; devil the line has she had from me since we sailed from the Chesapeake!"

"If ye don't mind me at once, Mr. Jack Joker, I'll lay my cutlass over your head," returned Merry, his voice now betraying a much greater sympathy in the sufferings of that abject race, who are still, in some measure, but who formerly were much more, the butts of the unthinking and licentious among our low countrymen; "then ye can write your letter in red ink if ye will!"

"I wouldn't do it for the world," said Joker, sneaking away toward his proper station; "the old lady would'nt forget the hand, and swear it was a forgery. I wonder, though, if the breakers on the coast of Guinea be black! as I've heard old seamen say who have cruised in them latitudes."

His idle levity was suddenly interrupted by a voice that spoke above the low hum of the march, with an air of authority, and a severity of tone, that could always quell, by a single word, the most violent ebullition of merriment in the crew.

The low buzzing sounds of "Ay, there goes Mr. Griffith!" and of "Jack has woke up the first lieutenant, he had better now go to sleep himself;" were heard passing among the men. But these suppressed communications soon ceased, and even Jack Joker himself pursued his way with diligence, on the skirts of the party, as mutely as if the power of speech did not belong to his organization.

The reader has too often accompanied us over the ground between the Abbey and the ocean to require any description of the route pursued by the seamen during the preceding characteristic dialogue; and we shall at once pass to the incidents which occurred on the arrival of the party at the cliffs. As the man who had so unexpectedly assumed a momentary authority within St. Ruth had unaccountably disappeared from among them, Griffith continued to exercise the right to command, without referring to any other for consultation. He never addressed himself to Barnstable, and it was apparent that both the haughty young men felt that the tie which had hitherto united them in such close intimacy, was, for the present at least, entirely severed. Indeed, Griffith was only restrained by the presence of Cecilia and Katherine from arresting his refractory inferior on the spot; and Barnstable, who felt all the consciousness of error without its proper humility, with difficulty so far repressed his feelings as to forbear exhibiting in the presence of his mistress such a manifestation of his spirit as his wounded vanity induced him to imagine was necessary to his honor. The two, however, acted in harmony on one subject, though it was without concert or communication. The first object with both the young men was to secure the embarkation of the fair cousins; and Barnstable proceeded instantly to the boats, in order to hasten the preparations that were necessary before they could receive these unexpected captives; the descent of the pilot having been made in such force as to require the use of all the frigate's boats, which were left riding

in the outer edge of the surf, awaiting the return of the expedition.

A loud call from Barnstable gave notice to the officer in command, and in a few moments the beach was crowded with the busy and active crews of the "cutters," "launches," "barges," "jolly-boats," "pinnaces," or by whatever names the custom of the times attached to the different attendants of vessels-of-war. Had the fears of the ladies themselves been consulted, the frigate's launch would have been selected for their use, on account of its size; but Barnstable, who would have thought such a choice on his part humiliating to his guests, ordered the long low barge of Captain Munson to be drawn upon the sand, it being peculiarly the boat of honor. The hands of fifty men were applied to the task, and it was soon announced to Colonel Howard and his wards that the little vessel was ready for their reception. Manual had halted on the summit of the cliffs with the whole body of the marines, where he was busily employed in posting pickets and sentinels, and giving the necessary instructions to his men to cover the embarkation of the seamen, in a style that he conceived to be altogether military. The mass of the common prisoners, including the inferior domestics of the Abbey, and the men of Borroughcliffe, were also held in the same place, under a suitable guard; but Colonel Howard and his companion, attended by the ladies and their own maids, had decended the rugged path to the beach, and were standing passively on the sands, when the intelligence that the boat waited for them was announced.

"Where is he?" asked Alice Dunscombe, turning her head, as if anxiously searching for some other than those around her.

"Where is who?" inquired Barnstable; "we are all here, and the boat waits."

"And will he tear me—even me, from the home of my infancy! the land of my birth and my affections?"

"I know not of whom you speak, madame, but if it be of Mr. Griffith, he stands there, just without that cluster of seamen."

Griffith, hearing himself thus named, approached the ladies, and, for the first time since leaving the Abbey, addressed them: "I hope I am already understood," he said, "and that it is unnecessary for me to say that no female here is a prisoner; though, should any choose to trust themselves on board our ship, I pledge to them the honor of an officer, that they shall find themselves protected and safe."

"Then will I not go," said Alice.

"It is not expected of you," said Cecilia; "you have no ties to bind you to any here." (The eyes of Alice were still wandering over the listeners.) "Go, then, Miss Alice, and be the mistress of St. Ruth, until my return; or," she added, timidly, "until Colonel Howard may declare his pleasure."

"I obey you, dear child, but the agent of Colonel Howard, at B——, will undoubtedly be authorized to take charge of his effects."

While no one but his niece alluded to his will, the master of the Abbey had found, in his resentment, a sufficient apology for his rigid demeanor; but he was far too well bred to bear, in silence, such a modest appeal to his wishes from so fair and so loyal a subject as Alice Dunscombe.

"To relieve you, madam, and for no other reason, will I speak on this subject," he said; "otherwise, I should leave the doors and windows of St. Ruth open as a melancholy monument of rebellion, and seek my future compensation from the crown, when the confiscated estates of the leaders of this accursed innovation on the rights of princes shall come to the hammer. But you, Miss Alice, are entitled to every consideration that a lady can expect from a gentleman. Be pleased, therefore, to write to my agent, and request him to seal up my papers and transmit them to the office of his majesty's secretary of state. They breathe no treason, madam, and are entitled to official protection. The house, and most of the furniture, as you know, are the property of my landlord, who, in due time, will doubtless take charge of his own interest. I kiss your hand, Miss Alice, and I hope we shall yet meet at St. James's—depend on it,

madam, that the royal Charlotte shall yet honor your merits; I know she cannot but estimate your loyalty."

"Here I was born, in humble obscurity —here I have lived, and here I hope to die in quiet," returned the meek Alice; "if I have known any pleasure, in late years, beyond that which every Christian can find in our daily duties, it has been, my sweet friends, in your accidental society. Such companions, in this remote corner of the kingdom, have been a boon too precious to be enjoyed without alloy, it seems; and I have now to exchange the past pleasure for present pain. Adieu! my young friends; let your trust be in Him to whose eyes both prince and peasant, the European and the American, are alike, and we shall meet again, though it be neither in the island of Britain nor on your own wide continent."

"That," said Colonel Howard, advancing, and taking her hand with kindness, "that is the only disloyal sentiment I have ever heard fall from the lips of Miss Alice Dunscombe! Is it to be supposed that Heaven established orders among men, and that it does not respect the works of its own formation! But adieu; no doubt, if time was allowed us for suitable explanations, we should find but little or no difference of opinion on this subject."

Alice did not appear to consider the matter as worthy of further discussion at such a moment; for she gently returned the colonel's leave-taking, and then gave her undivided attention to her female friends. Cecilia wept bitterly on the shoulder of her respected companion, giving vent to her regret at parting, and her excited feelings, at the same moment; and Katherine pressed to the side of Alice, with the kindliness prompted by her warm but truant heart. Their embraces were given and received in silence, and each of the young ladies moved toward the boat, as she withdrew herself from the arms of Miss Dunscombe. Colonel Howard would not precede his wards, neither would he assist them into the barge. That attention they received from Barnstable, who, after seeing the ladies and their attendants seated, turned to the gentlemen, and observed:

"The boat waits."

"Well, Miss Alice," said Borroughcliffe, in bitter irony, "you are intrusted by our excellent host with a message to his agent; will you do a similar service to me, and write a report to the commander of the district, and just tell him what a dolt—ay, use the plainest terms, and say what an ass one Captain Borroughcliffe has proved himself in this affair? You may throw in, by way of episode, that he has been playing bo-peep with a rebellious young lady from the colonies, and, like a great boy, has had his head broken for his pains. Come, my worthy host, or rather fellow-prisoner, I follow you, as in duty bound."

"Stay," cried Griffith; "Captain Borroughcliffe does not embark in the boat."

"Ha! sir; am I to be herded with the common men? Forget you that I have the honor to bear the commission of his Britannic Majesty, and that——"

"I forget nothing that a gentleman is bound to remember, Captain Borroughcliffe; among other things, I recollect the liberality of your treatment to myself when a prisoner. The instant the safety of my command will justify such a step, not only you, but your men, shall be set at liberty."

Borroughcliffe started in surprise, but his feelings were too much soured by the destruction of those visions of glory, in which he had been luxuriously indulging for the last day or two, to admit of his answering as became a man. He swallowed his emotions, therefore, by a violent effort, and walked along the beach affecting to whistle a low but lively air.

"Well, then," cried Barnstable, "all our captives are seated. The boat waits only for its officers!"

In his turn, Griffith walked away in haughty silence, as if disdaining to hold communion with his former friend. Barnstable paused a moment, from a deference that long habit had created for his superior officer, and which was not to be shaken off by every burst of angry passion; but, perceiving that the other had

no intention to return, he ordered the seamen to raise the boat from the sand, and bear it bodily into the water. The command was instantly obeyed; and, by the time the young lieutenant was in his seat, the barge was floating in the still heavy though no longer dangerous surf, and the crew sprang into their places.

"Bear her off, boys!" he cried; "never mind a wet jacket. I've seen many a worthy fellow tumbling on this beach in a worse time than this. Now you have her head to sea; give way, my souls, give way!"

The seamen rose simultaneously at their oars, and, by a united effort, obtained the command of their boat, which, after making a few sudden ascents, and as many heavy pitches in the breakers, gained the smooth seas of the swelling ocean, and stemmed the waters in a direction for the place where the *Alacrity* was supposed to be in waiting.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"His only plot was this—that, much provoked,
He raised his vengeful arm against his country."
—THOMSON.

ALICE DUNSCOMBE remained on the sands, watching the dark spot that was soon hid amid the waves in the obscurity of night, and listening, with melancholy interest, to the regulated sounds of the oars, which were audible long after the boat had been blended with the gloomy outline of the eastern horizon. When all traces of her departed friends were to be found only in her own recollections, she slowly turned from the sea, and, hastening to quit the bustling throng that were preparing for the embarkation of the rest of the party, she ascended the path that conducted her once more to the summit of those cliffs, along which she had so often roved, gazing at the boundless element that washed their base with sensations that might have been peculiar to her own situation.

The soldiers of Borroughcliffe, who were stationed at the head of the pass, respectfully made way; nor did any of the sentinels of Manual heed her retiring figure, until she approached the rear-guard of the marines, who were commanded by their vigilant captain in person.

"Who goes there?" cried Manual, advancing without the dusky group of soldiers, as she approached them.

"One who possesses neither the power nor the inclination to do ye harm," answered the solitary female; "'tis Alice Dunscombe, returning, by permission of your leader, to the place of her birth."

"Ay," muttered Manual, "this is one of Griffith's unmilitary exhibitions of his politeness! Does the man think that there was ever a woman who had no tongue! Have you the countersign, madam, that I may know you bear a sufficient warrant to pass?"

"I have no other warrant besides my sex and weakness, unless Mr. Griffith's knowledge that I have left him can be so considered."

"The two former are enough," said a voice, that proceeded from a figure which had hitherto stood unseen, shaded by the trunk of an oak, that spread its wide but naked arms above the spot where the guard was paraded.

"Who have we here?" Manual again cried. "Come in; yield, or you will be fired at."

"What! will the gallant Captain Manual fire on his own rescuer?" said the pilot with cool disdain, as he advanced from the shadow of the tree. "He had better reserve his bullets for his enemies than waste them on his friends."

"You have done a dangerous deed, sir, in approaching, clandestinely, a guard of marines! I wonder that a man who has already discovered, to-night, that he has some knowledge of tactics, by so ably conducting a surprise, should betray so much ignorance in the forms of approaching a picket!"

"'Tis now of no moment," returned the pilot; "my knowledge and my ignorance are alike immaterial, as the command of the party is surrendered to other and perhaps more proper hands. But I would talk to this lady alone, sir; she is an ac-

quaintance of my youth, and I will see her on her way to the Abbey."

"The step would be unmilitary, Mr. Pilot, and you will excuse me if I do not consent to any of our expedition straggling without the sentries. If you choose to remain here to hold your discourse, I will march the picket out of hearing; though I must acknowledge I see no ground so favorable as this we are on, to keep you within the range of our eyes. You perceive that I have a ravine to retreat into in case of surprise, with this line of wall on my left flank and the trunk of that tree to cover my right. A very pretty stand might be made here, on emergency; for even the oldest troops fight the best when their flanks are properly covered, and a way to make a regular retreat is open in their rear."

"Say no more, sir; I would not break up such a position on any account," returned the pilot; "the lady will consent to retrace her path for a short distance."

Alice followed his steps, in compliance with this request, until he had led her to a place, at some little distance from the marines, where a tree had been prostrated by the late gale. She seated herself quietly on its trunk, and appeared to await with patience his own time for the explanation of his motives in seeking the interview. The pilot paced for several minutes back and forth, in front of the place where she was seated, in profound silence, as if communing with himself; when suddenly throwing off his air of absence, he came to her side and assumed a position similar to the one which she herself had taken.

"The hour is at hand, Alice, when we must part," he at length commenced; "it rests with yourself whether it shall be forever."

"Let it then be forever, John," she returned, with a slight tremor in her voice.

"That word would have been less appalling had this accidental meeting never occurred. And yet your choice may have been determined by prudence—for what is there in my fate that can tempt a woman to wish that she might share it?"

"If ye mean your lot is that of one who can find but few, or even none, to partake of his joys, or to share in his sorrows—whose life is a continual scene of dangers and calamities, of disappointments and mishaps—then do ye know but little of the heart of woman, if ye doubt of either her ability or her willingness to meet them with the man of her choice."

"Say you thus, Alice? then have I misunderstood your meaning, or misinterpreted your acts. My lot is not altogether that of a neglected man, unless the favor of princes and the smiles of queens are allowed to go for nothing. My life is, however, one of many and fearful dangers; and yet it is not filled altogether with calamities and mishaps; is it, Alice?" He paused a moment, but in vain, for her answer. "Nay, then, I have been deceived in the estimation that the world has affixed to my combats and enterprises; I am not, Alice, the man I would be, or even the man I had deemed myself."

"You have gained a name, John, among the warriors of the age," she answered, in a subdued voice; "and it is a name that may be said to be written in blood!"

"The blood of my enemies, Alice!"

"The blood of the subjects of your natural prince! The blood of those who breathe the air you first breathed, and who were taught the same holy lessons of instruction that you were first taught, but which, I fear, you have too soon forgotten!"

"The blood of the slaves of despotism!" he sternly interrupted her; "the blood of the enemies of freedom! You have dwelt so long in this dull retirement, and you have cherished so blindly the prejudices of your youth, that the promise of those noble sentiments I once thought I could see budding in Alice Dunscombe, has not been fulfilled."

"I have lived and thought only as a woman, as become my sex and station," Alice meekly replied; "and when it shall be necessary for me to live and think otherwise, I should wish to die."

"Ay, there lie the first seeds of slavery! A dependent woman is sure to make the

mother of craven and abject wretches, who dishonor the name of man!"

"I shall never be the mother of children, good or bad," said Alice, with that resignation in her tones that showed she had abandoned the natural hopes of her sex. "Singly and unsupported have I lived; alone and unlamented must I be carried to my grave."

The exquisite pathos of her voice, as she uttered this placid speech, blended as it was with the sweet and calm dignity of virgin pride, touched the heart of her listener, and he continued silent many moments, as if in reverence of her determination. Her sentiments awakened in his own breast those feelings of generosity and disinterestedness, which had nearly been smothered in restless ambition and the pride of success. He resumed the discourse, therefore, more mildly, and with a much greater exhibition of deep feeling, and less of passion, in his manner.

"I know not, Alice, that I ought, situated as I am, and contented, if not happy, as you are, even to attempt to revive in your bosom those sentiments which I was once led to think existed there. It cannot, after all, be a desirable fate to share the lot of a rover like myself; one who may be termed a Quixote in the behalf of liberal principles, and who may be hourly called to seal the truth of those principles with his life."

"There never existed any sentiment, in my breast, in which you are concerned, that does not exist there still, and unchanged," returned Alice, with her single-hearted sincerity.

"Do I hear you aright? or have I misconceived your resolution to abide in England? or have I not rather mistaken your early feelings?"

"You have fallen into no error now nor then. The weakness may still exist, John; but the strength to struggle with it has, by the goodness of God, grown with my years. It is not, however, of myself, but of you, that I would speak. I have lived like one of our simple daisies, which in the budding may have caught your eye; and I shall also wilt like the humble flower, when the winter of my time arrives, without being missed from the fields that have known me for a season. But your fall, John, will be like that of the oak that now supports us, and men shall pronounce on the beauty and grandeur of the noble stem while standing, as well as of its usefulness when felled."

"Let them pronounce as they will!" returned the proud stranger. "The truth must be finally known; and when that hour shall come, they will say, he was a faithful and gallant warrior in his day; and a worthy lesson for all who are born in slavery, but would live in freedom, shall be found in his example."

"Such may be the language of that distant people, whom ye have adopted in the place of those who once formed home and kin to ye," said Alice, glancing her eye timidly at his countenance, as if to discern how far she might venture, without awakening his resentment; "but what will the men of the land of your birth transmit to their children, who will be the children of those that are of your own blood?"

"They will say, Alice, whatever their crooked policy may suggest, or their disappointed vanity can urge. But the picture must be drawn by the friends of the hero, as well as by his enemies! Think you that there are not pens as well as swords in America?"

"I have heard that America called a land, John, where God had lavished his favors with an unsparing hand; where He has bestowed many climes with their several fruits, and where His power is exhibited no less than His mercy. It is said her rivers are without any known end, and that lakes are found in her bosom which would put our German Ocean to shame! The plains, teeming with verdure, are spread over wide degrees; and yet those sweet valleys, which a single heart can hold, are not wanting. In short, John, I hear it is a broad land, that can furnish food for each passion, and contain objects for every affection."

"Ay, you have found those, Alice, in your solitude, who have been willing to do her justice! It is a country that can

form a world of itself; and why should they who inherit it look to other nations for their laws?"

"I pretend not to reason on the right of the children of that soil to do whatever they may deem most meet for their own welfare," returned Alice; "but can men be born in such a land and not know the feelings which bind a human being to the place of his birth?"

"Can you doubt that they should be patriotic?" exclaimed the pilot, in surprise. "Do not their efforts in this sacred cause—their patient sufferings—their long privations—speak loudly in their behalf?"

"And will they, who know so well how to love home, sing the praises of him who has turned his ruthless hand against the land of his fathers?"

"Forever harping on that word home!" said the pilot, who now detected the timid approaches of Alice to her hidden meaning. "Is a man a stick or a stone that he must be cast into the fire, or buried in a wall wherever his fate may have doomed him to appear on the earth? The sound of home is said to feed the vanity of an Englishman, let him go where he will; but it would seem to have a still more powerful charm with English women!"

"It is the dearest of all terms to every woman, John, for it embraces the dearest of all its ties! If your dames of America are ignorant of its charm, all the favors which God has lavished on their land will avail their happiness but little."

"Alice," said the pilot, rising in his agitation, "I see but too well the object of your allusions. But on this subject we can never agree; for not even your powerful influence can draw me from the path of glory in which I am now treading. But our time is growing brief; let us, then, talk of other things. This may be the last time that I shall ever put foot on this island of Britain."

Alice paused to struggle with the feelings excited by this remark, before she pursued the discourse. But, soon shaking off the weakness, she added, with a rigid adherence to that course which she believed to be her duty:

"And now, John, that you have landed, is the breaking up of a peaceful family, and the violence ye have shown toward an aged man, a fit exploit for one whose object is the glory of which ye have spoken?"

"Think you that I have landed, and placed my life in the hands of my enemies, for so unworthy an object! No, Alice; my motive for this undertaking has been disappointed, and therefore will ever remain a secret from the world. But duty to my cause has prompted the step you so unthinkingly condemn. This Colonel Howard has some consideration with those in power, and will answer to exchange for a better man. As for his wards, you forget their home; their magical home is in America; unless, indeed, they find it nearer at hand, under the proud flag of a frigate that is now waiting for them in the offing."

"You talk of a frigate!" said Alice, with sudden interest in the subject; "is she your only means of escaping from your enemies?"

"Alice Dunscombe has taken but little heed of passing events to ask such a question of me!" returned the haughty pilot. "The question would have sounded more discreetly, had it been, 'Is she the only vessel with you that your ememies will have to escape from?'"

"Nay, I cannot measure my language at such a moment!" continued Alice, with a still stronger exhibition of anxiety. "It was my fortune to overhear a part of a plan that was intended to destroy, by sudden means, those vessels of America, that were in our seas."

"That might be a plan more suddenly adopted than easily executed, my good Alice. And who were these redoubtable schemers?"

"I know not but my duty to the king should cause me to suppress this information," said Alice, hesitating.

"Well, be it so," returned the pilot, coolly; "it may prove the means of saving the persons of some of the royal officers from death or captivity. I have already said, this may be the last of my visits to this island, and consequently, Alice, the last of our interviews——"

"And yet," said Alice, still pursuing the train of her own thoughts, "there can be but little harm in sparing human blood, and least of all in serving those whom we have long known and regarded!"

"Ah! that is a simple doctrine, and one that is easily maintained," he added, with much apparent indifference; "and yet King George might well spare some of his servants—the list of his abject minions is so long!"

"There was a man named Dillon, who lately dwelt in the Abbey, but who has mysteriously disappeared," continued Alice; "or, rather, who was captured by your companions; know you aught of him, John?"

"I have heard there was a miscreant of that name, but we have never met. Alice, if it please Heaven that this should be the last——"

"He was a captive in the schooner called the *Ariel*," she added, still unheeding his affected indifference to her communication: "and when permitted to return to St. Ruth, he lost sight of his solemn promise, and of his plighted honor, to wreak his malice. Instead of effecting the exchange that he had conditioned to see made, he plotted treason against his captors. Yes; it was most foul treason! for his treatment was generous and kind, and his liberation certain."

"He was a most unworthy scoundrel! But, Alice——"

"Nay, listen, John," she continued, urged to even a keener interest in his behalf by his apparent inattention; "and yet I should speak tenderly of his failings, for he is already numbered with the dead! One part of his scheme must have been frustrated; for he intended to destroy that schooner which you call the *Ariel*, and to have taken the person of the young Barnstable."

"In both of which he has failed! The person of Barnstable I have rescued, and the *Ariel* has been stricken by a hand far mightier than any of this world!—she is wrecked."

"Then is the frigate your only means of escape? Hasten, John, and seem not so proud and heedless; for the hour may come when all your daring will not profit ye against the machinations of secret enemies. This Dillon had also planned that expresses should journey to a seaport at the south, with the intelligence that your vessels were in these seas, in order that ships might be dispatched to intercept your retreat."

The pilot lost his affected indifference as she proceeded, and before she ceased speaking his eye was endeavoring to anticipate her words, by reading her countenance through the dusky medium of the starlight.

"How know you this, Alice?" he asked, quickly—"and what vessel did he name?"

"Chance made me an unseen listener to their plan, and—I know not but I forget my duty to my prince!—but, John, 'tis asking too much of a weak woman to require that she shall see the man whom she once viewed with eyes of favor, sacrificed, when a word of caution, given in season, might enable him to avoid the danger!"

"Once viewed with an eye of favor! Is it then so?" said the pilot, speaking in a vacant manner. "But, Alice, heard ye the force of the ships, or their names? Give me their names, and the first lord of your British admiralty shall not give so true an account of their force as I will furnish from this list of my own."

"Their names were certainly mentioned," said Alice, with tender melancholy; "but the name of one far nearer to me was ringing in my ears, and has driven them from my mind."

"You are the same good Alice I once knew! And my name was mentioned? What said they of the pirate? Had his arm striken a blow that made them tremble in their Abbey? Did they call him coward, girl?"

"It was mentioned in terms that pained my heart as I listened; for it is ever too easy a task to forget the lapse of years, nor are the feelings of youth to be easily eradicated."

"Ay, there is luxury in knowing that, with all their affected abuse, the slaves dread me in their secret holds!" exclaimed the pilot, pacing in front of his listener with quick steps. "This it is to

be marked, among men, above all others, in your calling! I hope yet to see the day when the third George shall start at the sound of that name, even within the walls of his palace."

Alice Dunscombe heard him in deep and mortified silence. It was too evident that a link in the chain of their sympathies was broken, and that the weakness in which she had been unconsciously indulging was met by no correspondent emotion in him. After sinking her head for a moment on her bosom, she arose with a little more than her usual air of meekness, and recalled the pilot to a sense of her presence, by saying, in a yet milder voice:

"I have now communicated all that it can profit you to know, and it is meet that we separate."

"What, thus soon?" he cried, starting and taking her hand. "This is but a short interview, Alice, to precede so long a separation."

"Be it short, or be it long, it must now end," she replied. "Your companions are on the eve of departure, and I trust you would be one of the last who would wish to be deserted. If ye do visit England again, I hope it may be with altered sentiments, so far as regards her interests. I wish ye peace, John, and the blessings of God, as ye may be found to deserve them."

"I ask no further, unless it be the aid of your gentle prayers! But the night is gloomy, and I will see you in safety to the Abbey."

"It is unnecessary," she returned, with womanly reserve. "The innocent can be fearless on occasion, as the most valiant among your warriors. But here is no cause for fear. I shall take a path that will conduct me in a different way from that which is occupied by your soldiers, and where I shall find none but Him who is ever ready to protect the helpless. Once more, John, I bid ye adieu!" Her voice faltered as she continued: "Ye will share the lot of humanity, and have your hours of care and weakness; at such moments ye can remember those ye leave on this despised island, and perhaps among them ye may think of some whose interest in your welfare has been far removed from selfishness."

"God be with you, Alice!" he said, touched with her emotion, and losing all vain images in more worldly feelings—"but I cannot permit you to go alone."

"Here we part, John," she said, firmly, "and forever! 'Tis for the happiness of both, for I fear we have but little in common." She gently wrested her hand from his grasp, and once more bidding him adieu, in a voice that was nearly inaudible, she turned and slowly disappeared, moving, with lingering steps, in the direction of the Abbey.

The first impulse of the pilot was, certainly, to follow, and insist on seeing her on the way; but the music of the guard on the cliffs at that moment sent forth its martial strains, and the whistle of the boatswain was heard winding its shrill call among the rocks, in those notes that his practiced ear understood to be the last signal for embarking.

Obedient to the summons, this singular man, in whose breast the natural feelings, that were now on the eve of a violent eruption, had so long been smothered by the visionary expectation of a wild ambition, and perhaps of fierce resentments, pursued his course, in deep abstraction, toward the boats. He was soon met by the soldiers of Borroughcliffe, deprived of their arms, it is true, but unguarded, and returning peacefully to their quarters. The mind of the pilot, happily for the liberty of these men, was too much absorbed in his peculiar reflections to note this act of Griffith's generosity, nor did he arouse from his musing until his steps were arrested by suddenly encountering a human figure in the pathway. A light tap on his shoulder was the first mark of recognition he received; when Borroughcliffe, who stood before him, said:

"It is evident, sir, from what has passed this evening, that you are not what you seem. You may be some rebel admiral or general, for aught that I know, the right to command having been strangely contested among ye this night. But let who will own the chief authority, I take

the liberty of whispering in your ear that I have been scurvily treated by you—I repeat, most scurvily treated by you all, generally, and by you in particlar."

The pilot started at this strange address, which was uttered with all the bitterness that could be imparted to it by a disappointed man; but he motioned with his hand for the captain to depart, and turned aside to pursue his own way.

"Perhaps I am not properly understood," continued the obstinate soldier. "I say, sir, you have treated me scurvily; and I would not be thought to say this to any gentleman without wishing to give him an opportunity to vent his anger."

The eye of the pilot, as he moved forward, glanced at the pistols which Borroughcliffe held in his hands, the one by the handle and the other by its barrel, and the soldier even fancied that his footsteps were quickened by the sight. After gazing at him until his form was lost in the darkness, the captain muttered to himself:

"He is no more than a common pilot, after all! No true gentleman would have received so palpable a hint with such a start. Ah! here comes the party of my worthy friend whose palate knows a grape of the north side of Madeira from one of the south. The dog has the throat of a gentleman; we will see how he can swallow a delicate allusion to his faults!"

Borroughcliffe stepped aside to allow the marines, who were also in motion for the boats, to pass, and watched with keen looks the person of the commander. Manual, who had been previously apprised of the intention of Griffith to release the prisoners, had halted to see that none but those who had been liberated by authority were marching into the country. This accidental circumstance gave Borroughcliffe an opportunity of meeting the other at some little distance from either of their respective parties.

"I greet you, sir," said Borroughcliffe, "with all affection. This has been a pleasant forage for you, Captain Manual."

The marine was far from being disposed to wrangle, but there was that in the voice of the other which caused him to answer:

"It would have been far pleasanter, sir, if I had met an opportunity of returning to Captain Borroughcliffe some of the favors that I have received at his hands."

"Nay, then, dear sir, you weigh my modesty to the earth! Surely you forget the manner in which my hospitality has already been requited—by some two hours mouthing of my sword-hilt; with a very unceremonious ricochet into a corner; together with a love-tap received over the shoulders of one of my men, by so gentle an instrument as the butt of a musket! Damme, sir, but I think an ungrateful man only a better sort of beast!"

"Had the love-tap been given to the officer instead of the man," returned Manual, with all commendable coolness, "it would have been better justice; and the ramrod might have answered as well as the butt, to floor a gentleman who carried the allowance of four thirsty fiddlers under one man's jacket."

"Now, that is rank ingratitude to your own cordial of the south side, and a most biting insult! I really see but one way of terminating this wordy war, which, if not discreetly ended, may lead us far into the morning."

"Elect your own manner of determining the dispute, sir; I hope, however, it will not be by your innate knowledge of mankind, which has already mistaken a captain of marines in the service of Congress for a runaway lover, bound to some green place or other."

"You might just as well tweak my nose, sir," said Borroughcliffe. "Indeed, I think it would be the milder reproach of the two! will you make your selection of these, sir? they were loaded for a different sort of service, but I doubt not will answer on occasion."

"I am provided with a pair that are charged for any service," replied Manual, drawing a pistol from his own belt, and stepping backward a few paces.

"You are destined for America, I know," said Borroughcliffe, who stood his ground with consummate coolness; "but it would be more convenient for me,

sir, if you could delay your march for a single moment."

"Fire and defend yourself!" exclaimed Manual, furiously, retracing his steps towards his enemy.

The sounds of two pistols were blended in one report, and the soldiers of Borroughcliffe and the marines all rushed to the place on the sudden alarm. Had the former been provided with arms, it is probable that a bloody fray would have been the consequence of the sight that both parties beheld on arriving at the spot, which they did simultaneously. Manual lay on his back, without any signs of life, and Borroughcliffe had changed his cool, haughty, upright attitude for a recumbent posture, which was somewhat between lying and sitting.

"Is the poor fellow actually expended?" said the Englishman, in something like the tones of regret; "well, he had a soldier's mettle in him, and was nearly as great a fool as myself!"

The marines had, luckily for the soldiers and their captain, by this time discovered the signs of life in their own commander, who had been only slightly stunned by the bullet, which had grazed his crown, and who, being assisted on his feet, stood a minute or two rubbing his head, as if awaking from a dream. As Manual came gradually to his senses, he recollected the business in which he had just been engaged, and, in his turn, inquired after the fate of his antagonist.

"I am here, my worthy *incognito*," cried the other, with the voice of perfect good nature; "lying in the lap of Mother Earth, and all the better for opening a vein or two in my right leg—though I do think that the same effect might have been produced without treating the bone so roughly!—But I opine that I saw you also reclining on the bosom of our common ancestor."

"I was down for a few minutes, I do believe," returned Manual; "there is the path of a bullet across my scalp."

"Humph! on the head!" said Borroughcliffe, dryly; "the hurt is not likely to be mortal, I see.—Well, I shall offer to raffle with the first poor devil I can find that has but one leg for who shall have them both; and that will just set up a beggar and a gentleman!—Manual, give me your hand; we have drank together, and we have fought; surely there is nothing now to prevent our being sworn friends."

"Why," returned Manual, continuing to rub his head, "I can see no irremovable objections—but you will want a surgeon? can I order anything to be done? There go the signals again to embark—march the fellows down at quick time, sergeant; my own man may remain with me, or, I can do altogether without assistance."

"Ah! you are what I call a well-made man, my dear friend!" exclaimed Borroughcliffe; "no weak points about your fortress! such a man is worthy to be at the *head* of a whole corps, instead of a solitary company.—Gently, Drill, gently: handle me as if I were made of potter's clay.—I will not detain you longer, my friend Manual, for I hear signal after signal; they must be in want of some of your astonishing reasoning faculties to set them afloat."

Manual might have been offended at the palpable allusions that his new friend made to the firmness of his occiput, had not his perception of things been a little confused by a humming sound that seemed to abide near the region of thought. As it was, he reciprocated the good wishes of the other, whom he shook most cordially by the hand, and once more renewed his offers of service, after exchanging sundry friendly speeches.

"I thank you quite as much as if I were not at all indebted to you for letting blood, thereby saving me a fit of apoplexy; but Drill has already dispatched a messenger to B—— for a leech, and the lad may bring the whole depot down upon you. Adieu, once more, and remember that if you ever visit England again as a friend, you are to let me see you."

"I shall do it without fail; and I shall keep you to your promise if you once more put foot in America."

"Trust me for that; I shall stand in need of your excellent head to guide me safely among those rude foresters.

Adieu; cease not to bear me in your thoughts."

"I shall never cease to remember you, my good friend," returned Manual, again scratching the member which was snapping in a manner that caused him to fancy he heard it. Once more these worthies shook each other by the hand, and again they renewed their promises of future intercourse; after which they separated like two reluctant lovers—parting in a manner that would have put to shame the friendship of Orestes and Pylades.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Nay, answer me; stand and unfold yourself."
—HAMLET.

DURING the time occupied by the incidents that occurred after the pilot had made his descent on the land the *Alacrity*, now under the orders of Mr. Boltrope, the master of the frigate, lay off and on, in readiness to receive the successful mariners. The direction of the wind had been gradually changing from the northeast to the south during the close of the day; and long before the middle watches of the night the wary old seaman, who, it may be remembered, had expressed in the council of war such a determined reluctance to trust his person within the realm of Britain, ordered the man who steered the cutter to stand in boldy for the land. Whenever the lead told them that it was prudent to tack, the course of the vessel was changed, and in this manner the seamen continued to employ the hours in patient attendance on the adventurers. The sailing-master, who had spent the early years of his life as the commander of divers vessels employed in trading, was apt, like many men of his vocation and origin, to mistake the absence of refinement for the surest evidence of seamanship, and, consequently, he held the little courtesies and punctilios of a man-of-war in high disdain.

His peculiar duties of superintending the expenditure of the ship's stores in their several departments, of keeping the frigate's log-book, and of making his daily examinations into the state of her sails and rigging, brought him so little in collision with the gay, laughing, rec'kless young lieutenants, who superintended the ordinary management of the vessel, that he might be said to have formed a distinct species of the animal, though certainly of the same genus with his more polished messmates. Whenever circumstances, however, required that he should depart from the dull routine of his duty, he made it a rule, as far as possible, to associate himself with such of the crew as possessed habits and opinions the least at variance with his own.

By a singular fatality the chaplain of the frigate was, as respects associates, in a condition nearly assimilated to that of this veteran tar.

An earnest desire to ameliorate the situation of those who were doomed to meet death on the great deep, had induced an experienced and simple-hearted divine to accept this station, in the fond hope that he might be made the favored instrument of salvation to many, who were then existing in a state of the most abandoned self-forgetfulness. Neither our limits, nor our present object, will permit the relation of the many causes that led, not only to an entire frustration of all his visionary expectations, but to an issue which rendered the struggle of the good divine with himself both arduous and ominous, in order to maintain his own claims to the merited distinctions of his sacred office. The consciousness of his backsliding had so far lessened the earthly if not the spiritual pride of the chaplain, as to induce him to relish the society of the rude master, whose years had brought him, at times, to take certain views of futurity that were singularly affected by the peculiar character of the individual. It might have been that both found themselves out of their places—but it was owing to some such secret sympathy, let its origin be what it would, that the two came to be fond of each other's company.

On the night in question, Mr. Boltrope

had invited the chaplain to accompany him in the *Alacrity;* adding, in his broad, rough language, that as there was to be fighting on shore, "his hand might come in play with some poor fellow or other." This singular invitation had been accepted, as well from a desire to relieve the monotony of a sea-life by any change, as perhaps with a secret yearning in the breast of the troubled divine, to get as nigh to *terra firma* as possible. Accordingly, after the pilot had landed with his boisterous party, the sailing-master and the chaplain, together with a boatswain's mate and some ten or twelve seamen, were left in quiet possession of the cutter. The first few hours of this peaceable intercourse had been spent by the worthy messmates, in the little cabin of the vessel, over a can of grog; the savory relish of which was much increased by a characteristic disquisition on polemical subjects, which our readers have great reason to regret it is not our present humor to record. When, however, the winds invited the near approach to the hostile shores already mentioned, the prudent sailing-master adjourned the discussion to another and more suitable time, removing himself and the can, by the same operation, to the quarter-deck.

"There," cried the honest tar, placing the wooden vessel, with great self-contentment, by his side on the deck, "this is ship's comfort! There is a good deal of what I call a lubber's fuss, parson, kept up on board a ship that shall be nameless, but which bears, about three leagues distant, broad off in the ocean, and which is lying-to under a close-reefed main-topsail, foretopmast-staysail and foresail—I call my hand a true one in mixing a can—take another pull at the halyards!—'twill make your eye twinkle like a light-house, this dark morning! You won't? well, we must give no offense to the Englishman's rum." After a potent draught had succeeded this considerate declaration, he added: "You are a little like our first lieutenant, parson, who drinks, as I call it, nothing but the elements—which is, water stiffened with air."

"Mr Griffith may indeed be said to set a wholesome example to the crew," returned the chaplain, perhaps with a slight consciousness that it had not altogether possessed its due weight with himself.

"Wholesome," cried Boltrope; "let me tell you, my worthy leaf-turner, that if you call such a light diet wholesome, you know but little of salt-water and sea-fogs! However, Mr. Griffith is a seaman; and if he gave his mind less to trifles and gimcracks he would be, by the time he got to about our years, a very rational sort of a companion. But you see, parson, just now, he thinks too much of small follies; such as man-of-war discipline. Now there is rationality in giving a fresh nip to a rope or in looking well at your mats, or even in crowning a cable; but damme, priest, if I see the use—Luff, luff, you lubber! don't you see, sir, you are steering for Garmany?—If I see the use, as I was saying, of making a rumpus about the time when a man changes his shirt; whether it be this week or next week, or, for that matter, the week after, provided it be bad weather. I sometimes am mawkish about attending muster (and I believe I have as little to fear on the score of behavior as any man), lest it should be found I carried my tobacco in the wrong cheek!"

"I have indeed thought it somewhat troublesome to myself, at times; and it is in a striking degree vexatious to the spirit, especially when the body has been suffering under sea-sickness."

"Why, yes, you were a little apt to bend your duds wrong for the first month or so," said the master; "I remember you got the marine's scraper on your head once, in your hurry to bury a dead man! Then you never looked as if you belonged to the ship, so long as those cursed black knee-breeches lasted! For my part, I never saw you come up the quarter-deck ladder, but I expected to see your shins give way across the coaming of the hatch—a man does look like the devil, priest, scudding about a ship's decks in that fashion, under bare poles! But now the tailor has found out the articles ar'n't seaworthy, and we have got your lower stanchions cased in a pair

of purser's slops, I am puzzled often to tell your heels from those of a maintop-man!"

"I have good reason to be thankful for the change," said the humbled priest, "if the resemblance you mentioned existed, while I was clad in the usual garb of one of my calling."

"What signifies a calling?" returned Boltrope, catching his breath after a most persevering draught; "a man's shins are his shins, let his upper works belong to what sarvice they may. I took an early prejudice to knee-breeches, perhaps from a trick I've always had of figuring the devil is wearing them. You know, parson, we seldom hear much said of a man, without forming some sort of an idea concerning his rigging and fashion-pieces; and so, as I had no particular reason to believe that Satan went naked—Keep full, ye lubber; now you are running into the wind's eye, and be d——d to ye!—But, as I was saying, I always took a conceit that the devil wore knee-breeches and a cocked hat. There's some of our young lieutenants, who come to muster on Sundays in cocked hats, just like soldier-officers; but, d'ye see, I would sooner show my nose under a nightcap than under a scraper."

"I hear the sound of oars!" exclaimed the chaplain, who, finding this image more distinct than even his own vivid conceptions of the great father of evil, was quite willing to conceal his inferiority by changing the discourse—"is not one of our boats returning?"

"Ay, ay, 'tis likely; if it had been me, I should have been land-sick before. this. Ware round, boys, and stand by to heave-to on the other tack."

The cutter, obedient to her helm, fell off before the wind; and, rolling an instant in the trough of the sea, came up again easily to her oblique position, with her head toward the cliffs; and, gradually losing her way, as her sails were brought to counteract each other, finally became stationary. During the performance of this evolution, a boat had hove up out of the gloom, in the direction of the land; and by the time the *Alacrity* was in a state of rest, it had approached so nigh as to admit of hailing.

"Boat ahoy!" murmured Boltrope, through a trumpet, which, aided by his lungs, produced sounds not unlike the roaring of a bull.

"Ay, ay!" was thrown back from a clear voice, that swept across the water with a fulness that needed no factitious aid to render it audible.

"Ay, there comes one of the lieutenants with his 'ay, ay,'" said Boltrope. "Pipe the side, there, you boatswain's mate! But here's another fellow more on our quarter! Boat ahoy!"

"*Alacrity*"—returned another voice in a direction different from the other.

"*Alacrity!* There goes my commission of captain of this craft in a whiff," returned the sailing-master. "That is as much as to say here comes one who will command when he gets on board. Well, well, it is Mr. Griffith, and I can't say, notwithstanding his love of knee-buckles and small wares, but I'm glad he's out of the hands of the English! Ay! here they all come upon us at once! here is another fellow that pulls like the jolly-boat, coming up on our lee-beam, within hail—let us see if he is asleep. Boat ahoy!"

"Flag," answered a third voice from a small light rowing boat, which had approached very near the cutter, in a direct line from the cliffs, without being observed.

"Flag!" echoed Boltrope, dropping his trumpet in amazement—"that's a big word to come out of jolly-boats! Jack Manly himself could not have spoken it with a fuller mouth—but I'll know who it is that carries such a weather helm, with a Yankee man-of-war's prize! Boat ahoy! I say."

This last call was uttered in those short, menacing tones that are intended to be understood as intimating that the party hailing is in earnest; and it caused the men who were rowing, and who were now quite close to the cutter, to suspend their strokes simultaneously, as if they dreaded that the cry would be instantly succeeded by some more efficient means of ascertaining their character. The figure that

was seated by itself in the stern of the boat started at this second summons, and then, as if with sudden recollection, a quiet voice replied:

"No—no."

"'No—no,' and 'flag' are very different answers," grumbled Boltrope; "what know-nothing have we here?"

He was yet muttering his dissatisfaction at the ignorance of the individual that was approaching, whoever it might be, when the jolly-boat came slowly to their side, and the pilot stepped from her sternsheets on the deck of the prize.

"Is it you, Mr. Pilot?" exclaimed the sailing-master, raising a battle-lantern within a foot of the other's face, and looking with a sort of stupid wonder at the proud and angry eye he encountered—"is it you! well, I should have rated you for a man of more experience than to come booming down upon a man-of-war in the dark, with such a big word in your mouth, when every boy in the two vessels knows that we carry no swallow-tailed bunting aboard! Flag! why you might have got a shot, had there been soldiers."

The pilot threw him a still fiercer glance, and, turning away with a look of disgust, he walked along the quarter-deck toward the stern of the vessel. with an air of haughty silence, as if disdaining to answer. Boltrope kept his eyes fastened on him for a moment longer, with some appearance of scorn; but the arrival of the boat first hailed, which proved to be the barge, immediately drew his attention to other matters. Barnstable had been rowing about in the ocean for a long time, unable to find the cutter; and as he had been compelled to suit his own demeanor to those with whom he was associated, he reached the *Alacrity* in no very good-humored mood. Colonel Howard and his niece had maintained, during the whole period, the most rigid silence, the former from pride, and the latter touched with her uncle's evident displeasure; and Katherine, though secretly elated with the success of all her projects, was content to emulate their demeanor for a short time in order to save appearances. Barnstable had several times addressed himself to the latter, without receiving any other answer than such as was absolutely necessary to prevent her lover from taking direct offense, at the same time that she intimated by her manner her willingness to remain silent. Accordingly, the lieutenant, after aiding the ladies to enter the cutter, and offering to perform the same service to Colonel Howard, which was coldly declined, turned, with that sort of irritation that is by no means less rare in vessels-of-war than with poor human nature generally, and gave vent to his spleen where he dared.

"How's this, Mr. Boltrope?" he cried; "here are boats coming alongside with ladies in them, and you keep your gaft swayed up till the leach of the sail is stretched like a fiddle-string—settle away your peak halyards, sir, settle away!"

"Ay, ay, sir," grumbled the master: "settle away that peak there; though the craft wouldn't forge ahead a knot in a month, with all her jibs hauled over." He walked sulkily forward among the men followed by the meek divine; and added, "I should as soon have expected to see Mr. Barnstable come off with a live ox in his boat as a petticoat! The Lord only knows what the ship is coming to next, parson! what between cocked hats and epaulets, and other knee-buckle matters, she was a sort of no-man's land before; and now, what with the women and their band-boxes, they'll make another Noah's ark of her. I wonder they didn't all come aboard in a coach-and-six, or a one-horse shay!"

It was a surprising relief to Barnstable to be able to give utterance to his humor, for a few moments, by ordering the men to make sundry alterations in every department of the vessel, in a quick, hurried voice that abundantly denoted, not only the importance of his improvements, but the temper in which they were dictated. In his turn, however, he was soon compelled to give way, by the arrival of Griffith in the heavily-rowing launch of the frigate, which was crowded with a larger body of the seamen who had been employed in the expedition. In this manner, boat after boat speedily arrived, and the whole party

were once more happily embarked in safety under their national flag.

The small cabin of the *Alacrity* was relinquished to Colonel Howard and his wards, with their attendants. The boats were dropped astern, each protected by its own keeper; and Griffith gave forth the mandate to fill the sails and steer broad off into the ocean. For more than an hour the cutter held her course in this direction, gliding gracefully through the glittering waters, rising and settling heavily on the long, smooth billows, as if conscious of the unusual burden that she was doomed to carry; but at the end of that period her head was once more brought near the wind, and she was again held at rest, awaiting the appearance of the dawn, in order to discover the position of the prouder vessel to which she was performing the humble duty of a tender. More than a hundred and fifty living men were crowded within her narrow limits; and her decks presented, in the gloom, as she moved along, the picture of a mass of human heads.

As the freedom of a successful expedition was unavoidably permitted, loud jokes and louder merriment broke on the silent water from the reckless seamen, while the exhilarating can passed from hand to hand, strange oaths and dreadful denunciations breaking forth at times from some of the excited crew against their enemy. At length the bustle of reembarking gradually subsided, and many of the crew descended to the hold of the cutter, in quest of room to stretch their limbs, when a clear, manly voice was heard rising above the deep in those strains that a seaman most loves to hear. Air succeeded air, from different voices, until even the spirit of harmony grew dull with fatigue, and verses began to be heard where songs were expected, and fleeting lines succeeded stanzas. The decks were soon covered with prostrate men, seeking their natural rest under the open heavens, and perhaps dreaming, as they yielded heavily to the rolling of the vessel, of scenes of other times in their own hemisphere. The dark glances of Katherine were concealed beneath her falling lids; and even Cecilia, with her head bowed on the shoulder of her cousin, slept sweetly in innocence and peace. Boltrope groped his way into the hold among the seamen, where, kicking one of the most fortunate men from his berth, he established himself in his place with all that cool indifference to the other's comfort that had grown with his experience from the time when he was treated thus cavalierly in his own person to the present moment. In this manner head was dropped after head on the planks, the guns, or on whatever first offered for a pillow, until Griffith and Barnstable, alone, were left pacing the different sides of the quarter-deck in haughty silence.

Never did a morning watch appear so long to the two young sailors, who were thus deprived, by resentment and pride, of that frank and friendly communion that had for so many years sweetened the tedious hours of their long, and at times, dreary service. To increase the embarrassment of their situation, Cecilia and Katherine, suffering from the confinement of the small and crowded cabin, sought the purer air of the deck, about the time when the deepest sleep had settled on the senses of the weary mariners. They stood leaning against the taffrail, discussing with each other in low and broken sentences; but a sort of instinctive knowledge of the embarrassment which existed between their lovers caused a guarded control over every look or gesture which might be construed into an encouragement for one of the young men to advance at the expense of the other. Twenty times, however, did the impatient Barnstable feel tempted to throw off the awkward restraint, and approach his mistress; but in each instance was he checked by the secret consciousness of error, as well as by that habitual respect for superior rank that forms a part of the nature of a sea officer. On the other hand, Griffith manifested no intention to profit by this silent concession in his favor, but continued to pace the quarter-deck, with strides more hurried than ever; and was seen to throw many an impatient glance toward that quarter of the heavens where the first

signs of the lingering day might be expected to appear. At length Katherine, with a ready ingenuity, and perhaps with some secret coquetry, removed the embarrassment, by speaking first, taking care to address the lover of her cousin:

"How long are we condemned to these limited lodgings, Mr. Griffith?" she asked: "truly, there is a freedom in your nautical customs, which, to say the least, is novel to us females who have been accustomed to the division of space!"

"The instant that there is light to discover the frigate, Miss Plowden," he answered, "you shall be transferred from a vessel of a hundred to one of twelve hundred tons. If your situation there be less comfortable than within the walls of St. Ruth, you will not forget that they who live on the ocean claim it as a merit to despise the luxuries of the land."

"At least, sir," returned Katherine, with a sweet grace, which she well knew how to assume on occasion, "what we shall enjoy will be sweetened by liberty and embellished by a sailor's hospitality. —To me, Cicely, the air of this open sea is as fresh and invigorating as if it were wafted from our own distant America."

"If you have not the arm of a patriot, you at least possess a most loyal imagination, Miss Plowden," said Griffith, laughing. "This soft breeze blows in the direction of the fens of Holland, instead of the broad plains of America. Thank God, there come the signs of day, at last! Unless the currents have swept the ship far to the north, we shall surely see her with the light."

The cheering intelligence drew the eyes of the fair cousins toward the east, where their delighted looks were soon fastened, while they watched the glories of the sun rising over the water. As the morning had advanced, a deeper gloom was spread across the ocean and the stars were gleaming in the heavens like balls of twinkling fire. But now a streak of pale light showed itself along the horizon, growing brighter and widening at each moment, until long, fleecy clouds became visible, where nothing had been seen before but the dim base of the arch that overhung the dark waters. This expanding light, which, in appearance, might be compared to a silvery opening in the heavens, was soon tinged with a pale flush, which quickened with sudden transitions into glows yet deeper, until a belt of broad flame bounded the water, diffusing itself more faintly toward the zenith, where it melted into the pearl-colored sky, or played on the fantastic volumes of a few light clouds with inconstant glimmering. While these beautiful transitions were still before the eyes of the youthful admirers of their beauties, a voice was heard above them, crying, as if from the heavens:

"Sail—ho! The frigate lies broad off to seaward, sir!"

"Ay, ay; you have been watching with one eye asleep, fellow," returned Griffith, "or we should have heard you before!— Look a little north of the place where the glare of the sun is coming, Miss Plowden, and you will be able to see our gallant vessel!"

An involuntary cry of pleasure burst from the lips of Katherine as she followed his directions, and first beheld the frigate through the medium of the fluctuating colors of the morning. The undulating outline of the hazy ocean, which rose and fell heavily against the bright boundary of the heavens, was without any relief to distract the eye as it fed eagerly on the beauties of the solitary ship. She was riding sluggishly on the long seas, with only two of her lower and smaller sails spread, to hold her in command: but her tall masts and heavy yards were painted against the fiery sky in strong lines of deep black, while even the smallest cord in the mazes of her rigging might be distinctly traced, stretching from spar to spar, with the beautiful accuracy of a picture. At moments when her huge hull rose on a billow, and was lifted against the background of sky, its shape and dimensions were brought into view, but these transient glimpses were soon lost, as it settled into the trough, leaving the waving spars bowing gracefully toward the waters, as if about to follow the vessel into the bosom of the deep. As a clearer light gradually stole on the senses, the delusion of col-

ors and distance vanished together, and when a flood of day preceded the immediate appearance of the sun, the ship became plainly visible within a mile of the cutter, her black hull checkered with ports, and her high, tapering masts exhibiting their proper proportions and hues.

At the first cry of "A sail!" the crew of the *Alacrity* had been aroused from their slumbers by the shrill whistle of the boatswain, and long before the admiring looks of the two cousins had ceased to dwell on the fascinating sight of morning chasing night from the hemisphere, the cutter was again in motion to join her consort. It seemed but a moment before their little vessel was in, what the timid females thought, a dangerous proximity to the frigate, under whose lee she slowly passed, in order to admit of the following dialogue between Griffith and his aged commander:

"I rejoice to see you, Mr. Griffith!" cried the captain, who stood in the channel of his ship, waving his hat in the way of cordial greeting. "You are welcome back, Captain Manual—welcome, welcome, all of you, my boys! as welcome as a breeze in the calm latitudes." As his eye, however, passed along the deck of the *Alacrity*, it encountered the shrinking figures of Cecilia and Katherine; and a dark shade of displeasure crossed his decent features, while he added: "How's this, gentlemen? The frigate of Congress is neither a ballroom, nor a church, that it is to be thronged with women!"

"Ay, ay," muttered Boltrope to his friend, the chaplain, "now the old man has hauled out his mizzen, you'll see him carry a weather helm! He wakes up about as often as the trades shift their points, and that's once in six months. But when there has been a neap-tide in his temper for any time, you're sure to find it followed by a flood with a vengeance. Let us hear what the first-lieutenant can say in favor of his petticoat quality!"

The blushing sky had not exhibited a more fiery glow than gleamed in the fine face of Griffith for a moment; but, struggling with his disgust, he answered with bitter emphasis: "'Twas the pleasure of Mr. Gray, sir, to bring off the prisoners."

"Of Mr. Gray!" repeated the captain, instantly losing every trace of displeasure in an air of acquiescence. "Come-to, sir, on the same tack with the ship, and I will hasten to order the accommodation-ladder rigged, to receive our guests!"

Boltrope listened to this sudden alteration in the language of his commander with sufficient wonder; nor was it until he had shaken his head repeatedly, with the manner of one who saw deeper than his neighbors into a mystery, that he found leisure to observe:

"Now, parson, I suppose if you held an almanac in your fist, you'd think you could tell which way we shall have the wind to-morrow! but damn me, priest, if better calculators than you haven't failed! Because a lubberly—no, he's a thorough seaman, I'll say that for the fellow!—because a pilot chooses to say, 'Bring me off these here women,' the ship is to be so cluttered with she-cattle that a man will be obligated to spend half his time in making his manners! Now mind what I tell you, priest, this very frolic will cost Congress the price of a year's wages for an able-bodied seaman in bunting and canvas for screens; besides the wear and tear of running-gear in shortening sail, in order that the women need not be 'stericky in squalls!"

The presence of Mr. Boltrope being required to take charge of the cutter, the divine was denied an opportunity of dissenting from the opinions of his rough companion; for the loveliness of their novel shipmates had not failed to plead loudly in their favor with every man in the cutter whose habits and ideas had not become rigidly set in obstinacy.

By the time the *Alacrity* was hove-to with her head toward the frigate, the long line of boats that she had been towing during the latter part of the night, were brought to her side, and filled with men. A wild scene of unbridled merriment and gayety succeeded, while the seamen were exchanging the confinement of the prize for their accustomed lodgings in the ship, during which the reins of discipline were

slightly relaxed. Loud laughter was echoed from boat to boat as they glided by each other; and rude jests, interlarded with quaint humors and strange oaths, were freely bandied from mouth to mouth. The noise, however, soon ceased, and the passage of Colonel Howard and his wards was then effected with less precipitancy and due decorum. Captain Munson, who had been holding a secret dialogue with Griffith and the pilot, received his unexpected guests with plain hospitality, but with an evident desire to be civil. He politely yielded to their service his two convenient state-rooms, and invited them to partake in common with himself of the comforts of the great cabin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Furious press the hostile squadron,
Furious he repels their rage,
Loss of blood at length enfeebles;
Who can war with thousands wage?"
—SPANISH WAR SONG.

WE cannot detain the narrative to detail the scenes which busy wonder, aided by the relation of divers marvelous feats, produced among the curious seamen who remained in the ship, and their more fortunate fellows who had returned in glory from an expedition to the land. For nearly an hour the turbulence of a general movement was heard, issuing from the deep recesses of the frigate, and the boisterous sounds of hoarse merriment were listened to by the officers in indulgent silence; but all these symptoms of unbridled humor ceased by the time the morning repast was ended, when the regular sea-watch was set, and the greater portion of those whose duty did not require their presence on the vessel's deck, availed themselves of the opportunity to repair the loss of sleep sustained in the preceding night. Still no preparations were made to put the ship in motion, though long and earnest consultations, which were supposed to relate to their future destiny, were observed by the younger officers to be held between their captain, the first lieutenant, and the mysterious pilot. The latter threw many an anxious glance along the eastern horizon, searching it minutely with his glass, and then would turn his impatient looks at the low, dense bank of fog, which, stretching across the ocean like a barrier of cloud, entirely intercepted the view toward the south. To the north and along the land the air was clear, and the sea without a spot of any kind; but in the east a small white sail had been discovered since the opening of day, which was gradually rising above the water, and assuming the appearance of a vessel of some size. Every officer on the quarter-deck in his turn had examined this distant sail, and had ventured an opinion on its destination and character; and even Katherine, who with her cousin was enjoying, in the open air, the novel beauties of the ocean, had been tempted to place her sparkling eye to a glass to gaze at the stranger.

"It is a collier," Griffith said "who has hauled from the land in the late gale, and who is luffing up to his course again. If the wind holds here in the south, and he does not get into that fog-bank, we can stand off for him and get a supply of fuel before eight bells are struck."

"I think his head is to the northward, and that he is steering off the wind," returned the pilot in a musing manner. "If that Dillon succeeded in getting his express far enough along the coast, the alarm has been spread, and we must be wary. The convoy of the Baltic trade is in the North Sea, and news of our presence could easily have been taken off to it by some of the cutters that line the coast. I could wish to get the ship as far south as the Helder!"

"Then we lose this weather-tide!" exclaimed the impatient Griffith; "surely we have the cutter as a lookout! besides, by beating into the fog, we shall lose the enemy, if enemy it be, and it is thought meet for an American frigate to skulk from her foes!"

The scornful expression that kindled the eye of the pilot, like a gleam of sunshine lighting for an instant some dark dell and laying bare its secrets, was soon lost in the usually quiet look of his glance, though

he hesitated like one who was struggling with his passions before he answered:

"If prudence and the service of the State require it, even this proud frigate must retreat and hide from the meanest of her enemies. My advice, Captain Munson, is that you make sail, and beat the ship to windward, as Mr. Griffith has suggested, and that you order the cutter to precede us, keeping more in with the land."

The aged seaman, who evidently suspended his orders only to receive an intimation of the other's pleasure, immediately commanded his youthful assistant to issue the necessary mandates to put these measures in force. Accordingly, the *Alacrity*, which vessel had been left under the command of the junior lieutenant of the frigate, was quickly under way; and making short stretches to windward, she soon entered the bank of fog, and was lost to the eye. In the meantime the canvas of the ship was loosened, and spread leisurely, in order not to disturb the portion of the crew who were sleeping; and, following her little consort, she moved heavily through the water, bearing up against the dull breeze.

The quiet of regular duty had succeeded to the bustle of making sail; and, as the rays of the sun fell less obliquely on the distant land, Katherine and Cecilia were amusing Griffith by vain attempts to point out the rounded eminences which they fancied lay in the vicinity of the deserted mansion of St. Ruth. Barnstable, who had resumed his former station in the frigate, as her second-lieutenant, was pacing the opposite side of the quarter-deck, holding under his arm the speaking trumpet, which denoted that he held the temporary control of the motions of the ship, and inwardly cursing the restraint that kept him from the side of his mistress. At this moment of universal quiet, when nothing above low dialogues interrupted the dashing of the waves as they were thrown lazily aside by the bows of the vessel, the report of a light cannon burst out of the barrier of fog, and rolled by them on the breeze, apparently vibrating with the rising and sinking of the waters.

"There goes the cutter!" exclaimed Griffith, the instant the sound was heard.

"Surely," said the captain, "Somers is not so indiscreet as to scale his guns, after the caution he has received!"

"No idle scaling of guns is intended there," said the pilot, straining his eyes to pierce the fog, but soon turning away in disappointment at his inability to succeed—"that gun is shotted, and has been fired in the hurry of a sudden signal!—Can your lookouts see nothing, Mr. Barnstable?"

The lieutenant of the watch hailed the man aloft, and demanded if anything were visible in the direction of the wind, and received for answer, that the fog intercepted the view in that quarter of the heavens, but that the sail in the east was a ship, running large, or before the wind. The pilot shook his head doubtingly at this information, but still he manifested a strong reluctance to relinquish the attempt of getting more to the southward. Again he communed with the commander of the frigate, apart from all other ears; and, while they yet deliberated, a second report was heard, leaving no doubt that the *Alacrity* was firing signal-guns for their particular attention.

"Perhaps," said Griffith, "he wishes to point out his position, or to ascertain ours, believing that we are lost like himself in the midst."

"We have our compasses!" returned the doubting captain; "Somers has a meaning in what he says!"

"See!" cried Katherine, with girlish delight, "see, my cousin! see Barnstable! how beautifully that vapor is wreathing itself in clouds above the smoky line of fog! It stretches already into the very heavens like a lofty pyramid!"

Barnstable sprang lightly on a gun, as he repeated her words:

"Pyramids of fog! and wreathing clouds! By Heaven!" he shouted, "'tis a tall ship! Royal, sky-sails, and studding-sails all abroad! She is within a mile of us, and comes down like a race-horse, with a spanking breeze, dead before it! Now know we why Somers is speaking in the mist!"

"Ay," cried Griffith, "and there goes the *Alacrity*, just breaking out of the fog, hovering in for the land!"

"There is a mighty hull under all that cloud of canvas, Captain Munson," said the observant but calm pilot. "It is time, gentlemen, to edge away to leeward."

"What, before we know from whom we run?" cried Griffith; "my life on it, there is no single ship King George owns, but would tire of the sport before she had played a full game of bowls with——"

The haughty air of the young man was daunted by the severe look he encountered in the eye of the pilot, and he suddenly ceased, though inwardly chafing with impatient pride.

"The same eye that detected the canvas above the fog might have seen the flag of a vice-admiral fluttering still nearer the heavens," returned the collected stranger; "and England, faulty as she may be, is yet too generous to place a flag-officer in time of war in command of a frigate, or a captain in command of a fleet. She knows the value of those who shed their blood in her behalf, and it is thus that she is so well served! Believe me, Captain Munson, there is nothing short of a ship-of-the-line under that symbol of rank and that broad show of canvas?"

"We shall see, sir, we shall see," returned the old officer, whose manner grew decided as the danger appeared to thicken. "Beat to quarters, Mr. Griffith, for we have none but enemies to expect on this coast."

The order was instantly issued, when Griffith remarked, with a more temperate zeal: "If Mr. Gray be right, we shall have reason to thank God that we are so light of heel!"

The cry of "a strange vessel close aboard the frigate," having already flown down the hatches, the ship was in an uproar at the first tap of the drum. The seamen threw themselves from their hammocks, and, lashing them rapidly into long hard bundles, they rushed to the decks, where they were dexterously stowed in the netting, to aid in the defenses of the upper part of the vessel. While this tumultuous scene was exhibiting, Griffith gave a secret order to Merry, who disappeared, leading his trembling cousins to a place of safety in the inmost depths of the ship.

The guns were cleared of their lumber, and loosened. The bulkheads were knocked down and the cabin relieved of its furniture; and the gun-deck exhibited one unbroken line of formidable cannon, arranged in all the order of a naval battery ready to engage. Arm-chests were thrown open, and the decks strewed with pikes, cutlasses, pistols, and all the various weapons of boarding. In short, the yards were slung and every other arrangement was made with a readiness and dexterity that were actually wonderful, though all was performed amid an appearance of disorder and confusion that rendered the ship another Babel during the continuance of the preparations. In a very few minutes everything was completed, and even the voices of the men ceased to be heard answering to their names, as they were mustered at their stations by their respective officers. Gradually the ship became as quiet as the grave; and when Griffith or his commander found it necessary to speak, their voices were calmer and their tones more mild than usual. The course of the vessel was changed to an oblique line from that in which their enemy was approaching, though the appearance of flight was to be studiously avoided to the last moment. When nothing further remained to be done, every eye became fixed on the enormous pile of swelling canvas that was rising in cloud over cloud far above the fog, and which was manifestly moving, like driving vapor, swiftly to the north. Presently the dull, smoky boundary of the mist which rested on the water was pushed aside in vast volumes, and the long, taper spars that projected from the bowsprit of the strange ship issued from the obscurity, and were quickly followed by the whole of the enormous fabric to which they were merely light appendages. For a moment streaks of reluctant vapor clung to the huge floating pile; but they were soon shaken off by the rapid vessel, and the whole of her black hull became distinct to the eye.

"One, two, three rows of teeth!" said Boltrope, deliberately counting the tiers of guns that bristled along the sides of the enemy; "a three-decker! Jack Manly would show his stern to such a fellow! and even the bloody Scotchman would run!"

"Hard up with your helm, quartermaster!" cried Captain Munson; "there is indeed no time to hesitate, with such an enemy within a quarter of a mile!—turn the hands up, Mr. Griffith, and pack on the ship from her trucks to her lower studding-sail booms. Be stirring! Hard up with your helm! Hard up, and be damned to you!"

The unusual earnestness of their aged commander acted on the startled crew like a voice from the deep, and they waited not for the usual signals of the boatswain and drummer to be given, before they broke away from their guns, and rushed tumultuously to aid in spreading the desired canvas. There was one minute of ominous confusion, that to an inexperience eye would have foreboded the destruction of all order in the vessel, during which every hand and each tongue seemed in motion; but it ended in opening the immense folds of light duck which were displayed along the whole line of the masts, far beyond the ordinary sails, overshadowing the waters for a great distance, on either side of the vessel. During the moment of inaction that succeeded this sudden exertion, the breeze, which had brought up the three-decker, fell fresher on the sails of the frigate, and she started away from the dangerous enemy with a very perceptible advantage in point of sailing.

"The fog rises!" cried Griffith; "give us but the wind for an hour, and we shall run her out of gunshot!"

"These nineties are very fast off the wind," returned the captain, in a low tone, that was intended only for the ears of his first-lieutenant and the pilot; "and we shall have a struggle for it."

The quick eye of the stranger was glancing over the movements of the enemy, while he answered:

"He finds we have the heels of him already! he is making ready, and we shall be fortunate to escape a broadside!—Let her yaw a little, Mr. Griffith; touch her lightly with the helm; if we are raked, sir, we are lost!"

The captain sprang on the taffrail of his ship with the activity of a young man, and in an instant he perceived the truth of the other's conjecture.

Both vessels now ran for a few minutes, keenly watching each other's motions like two skillful combatants, the English ship making slight deviations from the line of her course, and then, as her movements were anticipated by the other, turning as cautiously in the opposite direction, until a sudden and wide sweep of her huge bows told the Americans plainly on which tack to expect her. Captain Munson made a silent but impressive gesture with his arms, as if the crisis were too important for speech, which indicated to the watchful Griffith the way he wished the frigate sheered, to avoid the weight of the impending danger. Both vessels whirled swiftly up to the wind, with their heads toward the land; and as the huge black side of the three-decker, checkered with its triple batteries, frowned full upon her foe, it belched forth a flood of fire and smoke, accompanied by a bellowing roar that shook the surly moanings of the sleeping ocean. The nerves of the bravest man in the frigate contracted their fibers, as the hurricane of iron hurtled by them, and each eye appeared to gaze in stupid wonder, as if tracing the flight of the swift engines of destruction. But the voice of Captain Munson was heard in the din, shouting while he waved his hat earnestly in the required direction:

"Meet her! meet her with the helm, boy! meet her, Mr. Griffith, meet her!"

Griffith had so far anticipated this movement as to have already ordered the head of the frigate to be turned in its former course, when, struck by the unearthly cry of the last tones uttered by his commander, he bent his head, and beheld the venerable seaman driven through the air, his hat still waving, his gray hair floating in the wind, and his eye set in the wild look of death.

"Great God!" exclaimed the young man, rushing to the side of the ship, where he was just in time to see the lifeless body disappear in the waters that were dyed in its blood; "he has been struck by a shot! Lower away the boat, lower away the jolly-boat, the barge, the tiger, the——"

"'Tis useless," interrupted the calm, deep voice of the pilot; "he has met a warrior's end, and he sleeps in a sailor's grave! The ship is getting before the wind again, and the enemy is keeping his vessel away."

The youthful lieutenant was recalled by these words to his duty, and reluctantly turned his eyes away from the bloody spot on the waters, which the busy frigate had already passed, to resume the command of the vessel with a forced composure.

"He has cut some of our running gear," said the master, whose eye had never ceased to dwell on the spars and rigging of the ship: "and there's a splinter out of the maintop-mast that is big enough for a fid! He has let daylight through some of our canvas, too; but, taking it by-and-large, the squall has gone over, and little harm done. Didn't I hear something said of Captain Munson getting jammed by a shot?"

"He is killed!" said Griffith, speaking in a voice that was yet husky with horror—"he is dead, sir, and carried overboard; there is more need that we forget not ourselves in this crisis."

"Dead!" said Boltrope, suspending the operation of his active jaws for a moment, in surprise; "and buried in a wet jacket! Well, it is lucky 'tis no worse; for damme if I did not think every stick in the ship would have been cut out of her!"

With this consolatory remark on his lips, the master walked slowly forward, continuing his orders to repair the damages with a singleness of purpose that rendered him, however uncouth as a friend, an invaluable man in his station.

Griffith had not yet brought his mind to the calmness that was so essential to discharge the duties which had thus suddenly and awfully devolved on him, when his elbow was slightly touched by the pilot, who had drawn closer to his side.

"The enemy appears satisfied with the experiment," said the stranger; "and as we work the quicker of the two, he loses too much ground to repeat it, if he be a true seaman."

"And yet, as he finds we leave him so fast," returned Griffith, "he must see that all his hopes rest in cutting us up aloft. I dread that he will come by the wind again, and lay us under his broadside; we should need a quarter of an hour to run without his range, if he were anchored!"

"He plays a sure game—see you not that the vessel we made in the eastern board shows the hull of a frigate? 'Tis past a doubt that they are of one squadron, and that the expresses have sent them in our wake. The English admiral has spread a broad clew, Mr. Griffith; and, as he gathers in his ships, he sees that his game has been successful."

The faculties of Griffith had been too much occupied with the hurry of the chase to look at the ocean; but startled at the information of the pilot, who spoke coolly, though like a man sensible of the existence of approaching danger, he took the glass from the other and with his own eye examined the different vessels in sight. It is certain that the experienced officer, whose flag was flying above the light sails of the three-decker, saw the critical situation of the chase, and reasoned much in the same manner as the pilot, or the fearful expedient apprehended by Griffith would have been adopted. Prudence, however, dictated that he should prevent his enemy from escaping by pressing so closely on his rear as to render it impossible for the American to haul across his bows and run into the open sea between his own vessel and the nearest frigate of his squadron. The unpracticed reader will be able to comprehend the case better by accompanying the understanding eye of Griffith as it glanced from point to point, following the whole horizon. To the west lay the land, along which the *Alacrity* was urging her way industriously, with the double purpose of keeping

her consort abeam, and of avoiding a dangerous proximity to their powerful enemy. To the east, bearing off the starboard bow of the American frigate, was the vessel first seen, and which now began to exhibit the hostile appearance of a ship-of-war, steering in a line converging toward themselves, and rapidly drawing nigher; while far in the north-east was a vessel as yet faintly discerned, whose evolutions could not be mistaken by one who understood the movements of nautical warfare.

"We are hemmed in effectually," said Griffith, dropping the glass from his eye; "and I know not but our wisest course would be to haul in to the land, and, cutting everything light adrift, endeavor to cross the broadside of the flagship."

"Provided she left a rag of canvas to do it with!" returned the pilot. "Sir, 'tis an idle hope! She would strip your ship, in ten minutes, to her plank-shears. Had it not been for a lucky wave on which so many of her shot struck and glanced upward, we should have nothing to boast of left from the fire she has already given; we must stand on, and drop the three-decker as far as possible."

"But the frigates?" said Griffith, "what are we to do with the frigates?"

"Fight them!" returned the pilot, in a low, determined voice; "fight them! Young man, I have borne the stars and stripes aloft in greater straits than this, and even with honor! Think not that my fortune will desert me now!"

"We shall have an hour of desperate battle!"

"On that we may calculate; but I have lived through whole days of bloodshed! You seem not one to quail at the sight of an enemy."

"Let me proclaim your name to the men!" said Griffith; "'twill quicken their blood, and at such a moment be a host in itself."

"They want it not," returned the pilot, checking the hasty zeal of the other with his hand. "I would be unnoticed, unless I am known as becomes me. I will share your danger, but would not rob you of a tittle of your glory. Should we come to a grapple," he continued, while a smile of conscious pride gleamed across his face, "I will give forth the word as a war-cry, and, believe me, these English will quail before it!"

Griffith submitted to the stranger's will; and, after they had deliberated further on the nature of their evolutions, he gave his attention again to the management of the vessel. The first object which met his eye on turning from the pilot was Colonel Howard, pacing the quarter-deck with a determined brow and haughty mien, as if already in the enjoyment of that triumph which now seemed certain.

"I fear, sir," said the young man, approaching him with respect, "that you will soon find the deck unpleasant and dangerous. Your wards are——"

"Mention not the unworthy term!" interrupted the colonel. "What greater pleasure can there be than to inhale the odor of loyalty that is wafted from yonder floating tower of the king? And danger! you know but little of old George Howard, young man, if you think he would for thousands miss seeing that symbol of rebellion leveled before the flag of his majesty!"

"If that be your wish, Colonel Howard," returned Griffith, biting his lip as he looked around at the wondering seamen who were listeners, "you will wait in vain; but I pledge you my word that, when that time arrives, you shall be advised, and that your own hands shall do the ignoble deed."

"Edward Griffith, why not this moment? This is your moment of probation—submit to the clemency of the crown, and yield your crew to the royal mercy! In such a case I would remember the child of my brother Harry's friend; and, believe me, my name is known to the ministry. And you, misguided and ignorant abettors of rebellion! cast aside your useless weapons, or prepare to meet the vengeance of yonder powerful and victorious servant of your prince."

"Fall back! back with ye, fellows!" cried Griffith, fiercely, to the men who were gathering around the colonel, with looks of sullen vengeance. "If a man of

you dare approach him, he shall be cast into the sea!"

The sailors retreated at the order of their commander; but the elated veteran had continued to pace the deck for many minutes before stronger interests diverted the angry glances of the seamen to other objects.

Notwithstanding the ship-of-the-line was slowly sinking beneath the distant waves, and in less than an hour from the time she had fired the broadside no more than one of her three tiers of guns was visible from the deck of the frigate, she yet presented an irresistible obstacle against retreat to the south. On the other hand, the ship first seen drew so nigh as to render the glass no longer necessary in watching her movements. She proved to be a frigate, though one so materially lighter than the American, as to have rendered her conquest easy, had not her two consorts continued to press on for the scene of battle with such rapidity. During the chase the scene had shifted from the point opposite to St. Ruth to the verge of those shoals where our tale commenced. As they approached the latter, the smallest of the English ships drew so nigh as to render the combat unavoidable. Griffith and his crew had not been idle in the intermediate time, but all the usual preparations against the casualties of a sea-fight had been duly made, when the drum once more called the men to their quarters, and the ship was deliberately stripped of her unnecessary sails, like a prize-fighter about to enter the arena, casting aside the encumbrances of dress. At the instant she gave this intimation of her intention to abandon flight, and trust the issue to the combat, the nearest English frigate also took in her light canvas in token of her acceptance of the challenge.

"He is but a little fellow," said Griffith to the pilot, who hovered at his elbow with a sort of fatherly interest in the other's conduct of the battle, "though he carries a stout heart."

"We must crush him at a blow," returned the stranger; "not a shot must be delivered until our yards are locking."

"I see him training his twelves upon us already; we may soon expect his fire."

"After standing the brunt of a ninety-gun ship," observed the collected pilot, "we shall not shrink from the broadside of a two-and-thirty."

"Stand to your guns, men!" cried Griffith, through his trumpet—"not a shot to be fired without the order."

This caution, so necessary to check the ardor of the seamen, was hardly uttered, before their enemy became wrapped in sheets of fire and volumes of smoke as gun after gun hurled its iron missiles at their vessel in quick succession. Ten minutes might have passed, the two vessels sheering close to each other every foot they advanced, during which time the crew of the American were compelled by their commander to suffer the fire of their adversary without returning a shot. This short period, which seemed an age to the seamen, was distinguished in their vessel by deep silence. Even the wounded and dying, who fell in every part of the ship, stifled their groans, under the influence of the severe discipline which gave a character to every man and each movement of the vessel; and those officers who were required to speak, were heard only in the lowest tones of resolute preparation. At length the ship slowly entered the skirts of the smoke that enveloped their enemy; and Griffith heard the man who stood at his side whisper the word "Now!"

"Let them have it!" cried Griffith, in a voice that was heard in the remotest parts of the ship.

The shout that burst from the seamen appeared to lift the decks of the vessel, and the affrighted frigate trembled like an aspen with the recoil of her own massive artillery, that shot forth a single sheet of flame, the sailors having disregarded, in their impatience, the usual order of firing. The effect of the broadside on the enemy was still more dreadful; for a death-like silence succeeded to the roar of the guns, which was only broken by the shrieks and execrations that burst from her, like the moanings of the damned. During the few moments in which the Americans were again loading their cannon, and the Eng-

lish were recovering from their confusion, the vessel of the former moved slowly past her antagonist, and was already doubling across her bows, when the latter was suddenly, and, considering the inequality of their forces, it may be added desperately, headed into her enemy. The two frigates grappled. The sudden and furious charge made by the Englishman, as he threw his masses of daring seamen along his bowsprit and out of his channels, had nearly taken Griffith by surprise; but Manual, who had delivered his first fire with the broadside, now did good service by ordering his men to beat back the intruders by a steady and continued discharge. Even the wary pilot lost sight of their other foes in the high daring of that moment, and smiles of stern pleasure were exchanged between him and Griffith, as both comprehended at a glance their advantages.

"Lash his bowsprit to our mizzen-mast," shouted the lieutenant, "and we will sweep his decks as he lies!"

Twenty men sprang eagerly forward to execute the order, among the foremost of whom were Boltrope and the stranger.

"Ay, now he's our own!" cried the busy master, "and we will take an owner's liberties with him, and break him up—for, by the Eternal——"

"Peace, rude man," said the pilot, in a voice of solemn remonstrance; "at the next instant you may face your God; mock not his awful name!"

The master found time, before he threw himself from the spar on the deck of the frigate again, to cast a look of amazement at his companion, who, with a steady mien, but with an eye that lighted with a warrior's ardor, viewed the battle that raged around him like one who marked its progress to control the result.

The sight of the Englishmen rushing onward with shouts and bitter menaces warmed the blood of Colonel Howard, who pressed to the side of the frigate, and encouraged his friends, by his gestures and voice, to come on.

"Away with ye, old croaker!" cried the master, seizing him by the collar; "away with ye to the hold, or I'll order you fired from a gun!"

"Down with your arms, rebellious dog!" shouted the colonel, carried beyond himself by the ardor of the fray; "down to the dust, and implore the mercy of your injured prince!"

Invigorated by a momentary glow, the veteran grappled with his brawny antagonist; but the issue of the short struggle was yet suspended, when the English, driven back by the fire of the marines, and the menacing front that Griffith with his boarders presented, retreated to the forecastle of their own ship, and attempted to return the deadly blows they were receiving, in their hull, from the cannon that Barnstable directed. A solitary gun was all they could bring to bear on the Americans; but this, loaded with canister, was fired so near as to send its glaring flame into the very faces of their enemies. The struggling colonel, who was already sinking beneath the arm of his foe, felt the rough grasp loosen from his throat at the flash, and the two combatants sunk powerless on their knees facing each other.

"How now, brother?" exclaimed Boltrope, with a smile of grim fierceness; "some of that grist is gone to your mill, ha!"

No answer could, however, be given before the yielding forms of both fell to the deck, where they lay helpless amid the din of the battle and the wild confusion of the eager combatants.

Notwithstanding the furious struggle they witnessed, the elements did not cease their functions; and, urged by the breeze, and lifted irresistibly on a wave, the American ship was forced through the water still farther across the bows of her enemy. The idle fastenings of hemp and iron were snapped asunder like strings of tow, and Griffith saw his own ship borne away from the Englishman at the instant that the bowsprit of the latter was torn from its lashings, and tumbled into the sea, followed by spar after spar, until nothing of all her proud tackling was remaining but the few parted and useless ropes that were left dangling along the stumps of her lower masts. As his own

stately vessel moved from the confusion she had caused, and left the dense cloud of smoke in which her helpless antagonist lay, the eye of the young man glanced anxiously toward the horizon, where he now remembered he had more foes to contend against.

"We have shaken off the thirty-two most happily!" he said to the pilot, who followed his motions with singular interest; "but here is another fellow sheering in for us, who shows as many ports as ourselves, and who appears inclined for a closer interview; besides, the hull of the ninety is rising again, and I fear she will be down but too soon!"

"We must keep the use of our braces and sails," returned the pilot, "and on no account close with the other frigate; we must play a double game, sir, and fight this new adversary with our heels as well as with our guns."

"'Tis time then that we were busy, for he is shortening sail, and, as he nears so fast, we may expect to hear from him every minute; what do you propose, sir?"

"Let him gather in his canvas," returned the pilot; "and when he thinks himself snug, we can throw out a hundred men at once upon our yards, and spread everything alow and aloft; we may then draw ahead of him by surprise; if we can once get him in our wake I have no fears of dropping them all."

"A stern chase is a long chase," cried Griffith, "and the thing may do! Clear up the decks here, and carry down the wounded; and as we have our hands full, the poor fellows who have done with us must go overboard at once."

This melancholy duty was instantly attended to, while the young seaman who commanded the frigate returned to his duty with the absorbed air of one who felt its high responsibility. These occupations, however, did not prevent his hearing the sounds of Barnstable's voice calling eagerly to young Merry. Bending his head toward the sound, Griffith beheld his friend, looking anxiously up the main hatch, with face grimed with smoke, his coat off, and his shirt bespattered with human blood. "Tell me, boy," he said, "is Mr. Griffith untouched? They say that a shot came in upon the quarter-deck that tripped up the heels of half a dozen."

Before Merry could answer, the eyes of Barnstable, which even while he spoke were scanning the state of the vessel's rigging, encountered the kind looks of Griffith, and from that moment perfect harmony was restored between the friends.

"Ah! you are there, Griff, and with a whole skin, I see," cried Barnstable, smiling with pleasure; "they have passed poor Boltrope down into one of his own storerooms! If that fellow's bowsprit had held on ten minutes longer, what a mark I should have made on his face and eyes!"

"'Tis perhaps best as it is," returned Griffith; "but what have you done with those whom we are most bound to protect?"

Barnstable made a significant gesture toward the depths of the vessel as he answered:

"On the cables; safe as wood, iron, and water, can keep them—though Katherine has had her head up three times to——"

A summons from the pilot drew Griffith away, and the young officers were compelled to forget their individual feelings in the pressing duties of their stations.

The ship which the American frigate had now to oppose was a vessel of near her own size and equipage; and, when Griffith looked at her again, he perceived that she had made her preparations to assert her equality in manful fight.

Her sails had been gradually reduced to the usual quantity, and, by certain movements on her decks, the lieutenant and his constant attendant, the pilot, well understood that she only wanted to lessen her distance a few hundred yards to begin the action.

"Now spread everything," whispered the stranger.

Griffith applied the trumpet to his mouth and shouted in a voice that was carried even to his enemy: "Let fall—out with your booms—sheet home—hoist away of everything!"

The inspiring cry was answered by a universal bustle; fifty men flew out on the

dizzy heights of the different spars, while broad sheets of canvas rose as suddenly along the masts as if some mighty bird were spreading its wings. The Englishman instantly perceived his mistake and he answered the artifice by a roar of artillery. Griffith watched the effect of the broadside with an absorbing interest, as the shot whistled above his head; but when he perceived his masts untouched, and the few unimportant ropes only that were cut, he replied to the uproar with a burst of pleasure. A few men, were, however, seen clinging with wild frenzy to the cordage, dropping from rope to rope like wounded birds fluttering through a tree, until they fell heavily into the ocean, the sullen ship sweeping by them in cold indifference. At the next instant the spars and masts of their enemy exhibited a display of men similar to their own, when Griffith again placed the trumpet to his mouth and shouted aloud:

"Give it to them; drive them from their yards, boys; scatter them with your grape—unreeve their rigging!"

The crew of the American wanted but little encouragement to enter on this experiment with hearty good-will, and the close of his cheering words were uttered amid the deafening roar of his own cannon. The pilot had, however, mistaken the skill and readiness of their foe; for notwithstanding the disadvantageous circumstances under which the Englishman increased his sail, the duty was steadily and dexterously performed.

The two ships were now running rapidly on parallel lines, hurling at each other their instruments of destruction with furious industry, and with severe and certain loss to both, though with no manifest advantage in favor of either. Both Griffith and the pilot witnessed with deep concern this unexpected defeat of their hopes; for they could not conceal from themselves that each moment lessened their velocity through the water, as the shot of their enemy stripped the canvas from the yards, or dashed aside the lighter spars in their terrible progress.

"We find our equal here!" said Griffith to the stranger. "The ninety is heaving up again like a mountain, and, if we continue to shorten sail at this rate, she will soon be down upon us!"

"You say true, sir," returned the pilot, musing, "the man shows judgment as well as spirit; but——"

He was interrupted by Merry, who rushed from the forward part of the vessel, his whole face betokening the eagerness of his spirit and the importance of his intelligence:

"The breakers!" he cried, when nigh enough to be heard amid the din; "we are running dead on a ripple, and the sea is white not two hundred yards ahead."

The pilot jumped on a gun, and, bending to catch a glimpse through the smoke, he shouted, in those clear, piercing tones that could be even heard among the roaring of the cannon—"Port your helm! we are on the Devil's Grip! pass up the trumpet, sir; port your helm, fellow; give it them, boys—give it to the proud English dogs!" Griffith unhesitatingly relinquished the symbol of his rank, fastening his own firm look on the calm but quick eye of the pilot, and gathering assurance from the high confidence he read in the countenance of the stranger. The seamen were too busy with their cannon and their rigging to regard their new danger, and the frigate entered one of the dangerous passes of the shoals in the heat of a severely-contested battle. The wondering looks of a few of the older sailors glanced at the sheets of foam that flew by them, in doubt whether the wild gambols of the waves were occasioned by the shot of the enemy, when suddenly the noise of cannon was succeeded by the sullen wash of the disturbed element, and presently the vessel glided out of her smoky shroud, and was boldly steering in the center of the narrow passages. For ten breathless minutes longer the pilot continued to hold an uninterrupted sway, during which the vessel ran swiftly by ripples and breakers, by streaks of foam and darker passages of deep water, when he threw down his trumpet, and exclaimed:

"What threatened to be our destruction has proved our salvation! Keep yonder hill, crowned with wood, one point open

from the church-tower at its base, and steer east by north; you will run through these shoals on that course in an hour, and by so doing you will gain five leagues of your enemy, who will have to double their tail."

The moment he stepped from the gun, the pilot lost the air of authority that had so singularly distinguished his animated form, and even the close interest he had manifested in the incidents of the day became lost in the cold, settled reserve he had affected during his intercourse with his present associates. Every officer in the ship, after the breathless suspense of uncertainty had passed, rushed to those places where a view might be taken of their enemies. The ninety was still steering boldly onward, and had already approached the two-and-thirty, which lay a helpless wreck, rolling on the unruly seas that were rudely tossing her on their wanton billows. The frigate last engaged was running along the edge of the ripple, with her torn sails flying loosely in the air, her ragged spars tottering in the breeze, and everything above her hull exhibiting the confusion of a sudden and unlooked-for check to her progress. The exulting taunts and mirthful congratulations of the seamen, as they gazed at the English ships, were, however, soon forgotten in the attention that was required to their own vessel. The drums beat the retreat, the guns were lashed, the wounded again removed, and every individual able to keep the deck was required to lend his assistance in repairing the damages of the frigate and securing her masts.

The promised hour carried the ship safely through all the dangers, which were much lessened by daylight; and, by the time the sun had begun to fall over the land, Griffith, who had not quitted the deck during the day, beheld his vessel once more cleared of the confusion of the chase and battle, and ready to meet another foe. At this period he was summoned to the cabin, at the request of the ship's chaplain. Delivering the charge of the frigate to Barnstable, who had been his active assistant, no less in their subsequent labors than in the combat, he hastily divested himself of the vestiges of the fight, and proceeded to obey the repeated and earnest call.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way?"—BRYANT.

WHEN the young seaman who now commanded the frigate descended from the quarter-deck in compliance with the oft-repeated summons, he found the vessel restored to the same neatness as if nothing had occurred to disturb its order. The gun-deck had been cleansed of its horrid stains, and the smoke of the fight had long since ascended through the hatches and mingled with the clouds that flitted above the ship. As he walked along the silent batteries, even the urgency of his visit could not prevent him from glancing his eyes toward the splintered sides, those terrible vestiges by which the paths of the shot of their enemy might be traced; and by the time he tapped lightly at the door of the cabin, his quick look had embraced every material injury the vessel had sustained in her principal points of defense. The door was opened by the surgeon of the frigate, who, as he stepped aside to permit Griffith to enter, shook his head with that air of meaning which, in one of his profession, is understood to imply the abandonment of all hopes, and then immediately quitted the apartment, in order to attend to those who might profit by his services.

The reader is not to imagine that Griffith had lost sight of Cecilia and her cousin during the occurrences of that eventful day: on the contrary, his troubled fancy had presented her terror and distress, even in the hottest moments of the fight: and the instant that the crew were called from their guns he had issued an order to replace the bulkheads of the cabin, and to arrange its furniture for their accommodation, though the higher and imperious duties of his station had precluded his attending to their comfort in person. He

expected, therefore, to find the order of the rooms restored; but he was by no means prepared to encounter the scene he was now to witness.

Between two of the sullen cannon, which gave such an air of singular wildness to the real comfort of the cabin, was placed a large couch, on which the colonel was lying, evidently near his end. Cecilia was weeping by his side, her dark ringlets falling in unheeded confusion around her pale features, and sweeping in their rich exuberance the deck on which she kneeled. Katherine leaned tenderly over the form of the dying veteran, while her dark, tearful eyes seemed to express self-accusation blended with deep commiseration. A few attendants of both sexes surrounded the solemn scene, all of whom appeared to be under the influence of the hopeless intelligence which the medical officer had but that moment communicated. The servants of the ship had replaced the furniture with a care that mocked the dreadful struggle that so recently disfigured the warlike apartment, and the stout, square frame of Boltrope occupied the opposite settee, his head resting on the lap of the captain's steward, and his hand gently held in the grasp of his friend the chaplain. Griffith had heard of the wound of the master, but his own eyes now conveyed the first intelligence of the situation of Colonel Howard. When the shock of this sudden discovery had a little subsided, the young man approached the couch of the latter, and attempted to express his regret and pity, in a voice that afforded an assurance of his sincerity.

"Say no more, Edward Griffith," interrupted the colonel, waving his hand feebly for silence; "it seemeth to be the will of God that this rebellion should triumph and it is not for vain man to impeach the acts of Omnipotence. To my erring faculties, it wears an appearance of mystery, but doubtless it is to answer the purpose of his own inscrutable providence. I have sent for you, Edward, on business that I would fain see accomplished before I die, that it may not be said that old George Howard neglected his duty, even in his last moments. You see this weeping child at my side; tell me, young man, do you love the maiden?"

"Am I to be asked such a question?" exclaimed Griffith.

"And will you cherish her—will you supply to her the places of father and mother—will you become the fond guardian of her innocence and weakness?"

Griffith could give no other answer than a fervent pressure of the hand he had clasped.

"I believe you," continued the dying man; "for however he may have forgotten to inculcate his own loyalty, worthy Hugh Griffith could never neglect to make his son a man of honor. I had weak and perhaps evil wishes in behalf of my late unfortunate kinsman, Mr. Christopher Dillon; but they have told me that he was false to his faith. If this be true, I would refuse him the hand of the girl, though he claimed the fealty of the British realms. But he has passed away, and I am about to follow him into a world where we shall find but one Lord to serve; and it may have been better for us both had we more remembered our duty to Him, while serving the princes of the earth. One thing further—know you this officer of your Congress well—this Mr. Barnstable?"

"I have sailed with him for years," returned Griffith, "and can answer for him as myself."

The veteran made an effort to rise, which in part succeeded, and he fastened on the youth a look of keen scrutiny, that gave to his pallid features an expression of solemn meaning, as he continued:

"Speak not now, sir, as the companion of his idle pleasures, and as the unthinking associate commends his fellow, but remember that your opinion is given to a dying man who leans on your judgment for advice. The daughter of John Plowden is a trust not to be neglected, nor will my death prove easy, if a doubt of her being worthily bestowed shall remain."

"He is a gentleman," returned Griffith, "and one whose heart is not less kind than gallant—he loves your ward, and, great as may be her merit, he is deserving of it all. Like myself, he has also loved

the land that gave him birth, before the land of his ancestors, but——"

"That is now forgotten," interrupted the colonel; "after what I have this day witnessed, I am forced to believe that it is the pleasure of Heaven that you are to prevail! But, sir, a disobedient inferior will be apt to make an unreasonable commander. The recent contention between you——"

"Remember it not, dear sir," exclaimed Griffith, with generous zeal—"'twas unkindly provoked, and it is already forgotten and pardoned. He has sustained me nobly throughout the day, and my life on it, that he knows how to treat a woman as a brave man should!"

"Then am I content!" said the veteran, sinking back on the couch; "let him be summoned."

The whispering message which Griffith gave, requesting Mr. Barnstable to enter the cabin, was quickly conveyed, and he had appeared before his friend deemed it discreet to disturb the reflections of the veteran by again addressing him. When the entrance of the young sailor was announced, the colonel again roused himself, and addressed his wondering listener, though in a manner much less confiding and familiar than that which he had adopted toward Griffith.

"The declarations you made last night relative to my ward, the daughter of the late Captain John Plowden, sir, have left me nothing to learn on the subject of your wishes. Here, then, gentlemen, you both obtain the reward of your attention! Let the reverend divine hear you pronounce the marriage vows, while I have strength to listen, that I may be a witness against ye, in Heaven, should ye forget their tenor!"

"Not now, not now," murmured Cecilia; "oh, ask it not now, my uncle!"

Katherine spoke not; but deeply touched by the tender interest her guardian manifested in her welfare, she bowed her face to her bosom, in subdued feeling, and suffered the tears that had been suffusing her eyes to roll down her cheeks in large drops, till they bathed the deck.

"Yes, now, my love," continued the colonel, "or I fail in my duty. I go shortly to stand face to face with your parents, my children; for the man who, dying, expects not to meet worthy Hugh Griffith and honest Jack Plowden in heaven, can have no clear view of the rewards that belong to lives of faithful service to the country, or of gallant loyalty to the king! I trust no one can justly say that I ever forgot the delicacy due to your gentle sex; but it is no moment for idle ceremony when time is shortening into minutes, and heavy duties remain to be discharged. I could not die in peace, children, were I to leave you here in the wide ocean, I had almost said in the wide world, without that protection which becomes your tender years and still more tender characters. If it has pleased God to remove your guardian, let his place be supplied by those he wills to succeed him!"

Cecilia no longer hesitated, but she arose slowly from her knees, and offered her hand to Griffith with an air of forced resignation. Katherine submitted to be led by Barnstable to her side; and the chaplain, who had been an affected listener to the dialogue, in obedience to an expressive signal from the eye of Griffith, opened the prayer-book from which he had been gleaning consolation for the dying master, and commenced reading, in trembling tones, the marriage service. The vows were pronounced by the weeping brides in voices more distinct and audible than if they had been uttered amid the gay crowds that usually throng a bridal; for, though they were the irreclaimable words that bound them forever to the men whose power over their feelings they thus proclaimed to the world, the reserve of maiden diffidence was lost in one engrossing emotion of solemnity, created by the awful presence in which they stood. When the benediction was pronounced, the head of Cecilia dropped on the shoulder of her husband, where she wept violently for a moment, and then, resuming her place at the couch, she once more knelt at the side of her uncle. Katherine received the warm kiss of Barnstable passively, and returned to the spot whence she had been led.

Colonel Howard succeeded in raising his person to witness the ceremony, and had answered to each prayer with a fervent "Amen." He fell back with the last words; and a look of satisfaction shone in his aged and pallid features that declared the interest he had taken in the scene.

"I thank you, my children," he at length uttered, "I thank you; for I know how much you have sacrificed to my wishes.—You will find all my papers relative to the estates of my wards, gentlemen, in the hands of my banker in London; and you will also find there my will, Edward, by which you will learn that Cicely has not come to your arms an unportioned bride. What my wards are in persons and manners your eyes can witness, and I trust the vouchers in London will show that I have not been an unfaithful steward to their pecuniary affairs!"

"Name it not—say no more, or you will break my heart," cried Katherine, sobbing aloud, in the violence of her remorse at having ever pained so true a friend. "Oh! talk of yourself, think of yourself; we are unworthy—at least I am unworthy of another thought!"

The dying man extended a hand to her in kindness, and continued, though his voice grew feebler as he spoke:

"Then to turn to myself — I would wish to lie, like my ancestors, in the bosom of the earth—and in consecrated ground."

"It shall be done," whispered Griffith; "I will see it done myself."

"I thank thee, my son," said the veteran; "for such thou art to me in being the husband of Cicely—you will find, in my will, that I have liberated and provided for all my slaves—except those ungrateful scoundrels who deserted their master—they have seized their own freedom, and they need not be indebted to me for the same. There is, Edward, also an unworthy legacy to the king; his majesty will deign to receive it from an old and faithful servant, and you will not miss the trifling gift." A long pause followed, as if he had been summing up the account of his earthly duties, and found them duly balanced, when he added: "Kiss me, Cicely—and you, Katherine—I find you have the genuine feelings of honest Jack, your father. My eyes grow dim—which is the hand of Griffith? Young gentleman, I have given you all that a fond old man had to bestow—deal tenderly with the precious child—we have not properly understood each other—I had mistaken both you and Mr. Christopher Dillon, I believe; perhaps I may also have mistaken my duty to America—but I was too old to change my politics or my religion—I—I—I loved the king—God bless him——"

His words became fainter and fainter as he proceeded; and the breath deserted his body with this benediction on his livid lips, which the proudest monarch might covet from so honest a man.

The body was instantly borne into a state-room by the attendants; and Griffith and Barnstable supported their brides into the after-cabin, where they left them seated on the sofa that lined the stern of the ship, weeping bitterly in each other's arms.

No part of the preceding scene had been unobserved by Boltrope, whose small, hard eyes were observed by the young men to twinkle, when they returned into the state apartment; and they approached their wounded comrade to apologize for the seeming neglect that their conduct had displayed.

"I heard you were hurt, Boltrope," said Griffith, taking him kindly by the hand; "but, as I know you are not unused to being marked by shot, I trust we shall soon see you again on deck."

"Ay, ay," returned the master, "you'll want no spyglasses to see the old hulk as you launch it into the sea. I have had shot, as you say, before now to tear my running gear, and even to knock a splinter out of some of my timbers; but this fellow has found his way into my bread-room; and the cruise of life is up!"

"Sure the case is not so bad, honest David," said Barnstable; "you have kept afloat, to my knowledge, with a bigger hole in your skin than this unlucky hit has made!"

"Ay, ay," returned the master, "that was in my upper works, where the doctor could get at it with a plug; but this chap has knocked away the shifting-boards, and I feel as if the whole cargo was broken up. You may say that Tourniquet rates me all the same as a dead man; for, after looking at the shot-hole, he has turned me over to the parson here, like a piece of old junk which is only fit to be worked up into something new. Captain Munson had a lucky time of it! I think you said, Mr. Griffith, that the old gentleman was lauched overboard with everything standing, and that Death made but one rap at his door, before he took his leave!"

"His end was indeed sudden!" returned Griffith; "but it is what we seamen must expect."

"And for which there is so much the more occasion to be prepared," the chaplain ventured to add, in a low, humble, and, perhaps, a timid voice.

The sailing-master looked keenly from one to the other as they spoke; and, after a short pause, he continued, with an air of great submission:

"'Twas his luck; and I suppose it is sinful to begrudge a man his lawful luck. As for being prepared, parson, that is your business, and not mine; therefore, as there is but little time to spare, why, the sooner you set about it the better; and, to save unnecessary trouble, I may as well tell you not to strive to make too much of me; for, I must own it to my shame, I never took learning kindly. If you can fit me for some middling berth in the other world, like the one I hold in this ship, it will suit me as well, and perhaps be easier to all hands of us."

If there was a shade of displeasure blended with the surprise that crossed the features of the divine at this extraordinary limitation of his duties it entirely disappeared when he considered more closely the perfect expression of simplicity with which the dying master uttered his wishes. After a long and melancholy pause, which neither Griffith nor his friend felt any inclination to interrupt, the chaplain replied:

"It is not the province of man to determine on the decrees of the merciful dispensations of the Deity; and nothing that I can do, Mr. Boltrope, will have any weight in making up the mighty and irrevocable decree. What I said to you last night, in our conversation on this very subject, must still be fresh in your memory, and there is no good reason why I should hold different language to you now."

"I can't say that I logged all that passed," returned the master; "and that which I do recollect fell chiefly from myself, for the plain reason that a man remembers his own better than his neighbor's ideas.—And this puts me in mind, Mr. Griffith, to tell you that one of the forty-two's from the three-decker traveled across the forecastle, and cut the best bower within a fathom of the clinch as handily as an old woman would clip her rotten yarn with a pair of tailor's shears!—if you will be so good as to order one of my mates to shift the cable end-for-end, and make a new bend of it, I'll do as much for you another time."

"Mention it not," said Griffith; "rest assured that everything shall be done for the security of the ship in your department—I will superintend the whole duty in person; and I would have you release your mind from all anxiety on the subject, to attend to your more important interests elsewhere."

"Why," returned Boltrope, with a little show of pertinacity, "I have an opinion that the cleaner a man takes his hands into the other world, of the matters of duty in this, the better he will be fitted to handle anything new. Now, the parson, here, undertook to lay down the doctrine last night that it was no matter how well or how ill a man behaved himself, so that he squared his conscience by the lifts and braces of faith; which I take to be a doctrine that is not to be preached on shipboard; for it would play the devil with the best ship's company that was ever mustered."

"Oh! no—no—dear Mr. Boltrope, you mistook me and my doctrine altogether!" exclaimed the chaplain; "at least you mistook— - "

"Perhaps, sir," interrupted Griffith, gently, "our honest friend will not be more fortunate now. Is there nothing earthly that hangs upon your mind, Boltrope; no wish to be remembered to any one, nor any bequest to make of your property?"

"He has a mother, I know," said Barnstable, in a low voice; "he often spoke of her to me in the night-watches: I think she must be still living."

The master, who distinctly heard his young shipmates, continued for more than a minute rolling the tobacco, which he still retained, from one side of his mouth to the other, with an industry that denoted singular agitation for the man; and raising one of his broad hands, with the other he picked the worn skin from fingers which were already losing their brownish-yellow hue in the fading color of death, before he answered:

"Why, yes, the old woman still keeps her grip upon life, which is more than can be said of her son David. The old man was lost the time the *Susan and Dorothy* was wrecked on the back of Cape Cod; you remember it, Mr. Barnstable? you were then a lad, sailing on whaling-voyages, from the island; well, ever since that gale, I've endeavored to make smooth water for the old woman myself, though she has had but a rough passage of it, at the best; the voyage of life, with her, having been pretty much crossed by rugged weather and short stores."

"And you would have us carry some message to her?" said Griffith, kindly.

"Why, as to messages," continued the master, whose voice was rapidly growing more husky and broken, "there never has been many compliments—passed between us, for the reason—that she is not more used to receive them—than I am to make them. But if any of you will overhaul—the purser's books, and see what there is standing there—to my side of the leaf—and take a little pains to get it to the old woman—you will find her moored in the lee-side of a house—ay, here it is, No. 10 Cornhill, Boston. I took care—to get her a good warm berth, seeing that a woman of eighty wants a snug anchorage—at her time of life, if ever."

"I will do it myself, David," cried Barnstable, struggling to conceal his emotion; "I will call on her the instant we let go our anchor in Boston harbor; and, as your credit can't be large, I will divide my own purse with her!"

The sailing-master was powerfully affected by this kind offer; the muscles of his hard weather-beaten face working convulsively, and it was a moment before he could trust his voice in reply.

"I know you would, Dicky, I know you would," he at length uttered, grasping the hand of Barnstable with a portion of his former strength; "I know you would give the old woman one of your own limbs, if it would do a service—to the mother of a messmate—which it would not—seeing that I am not the son of a —cannibal; but you are out of your father's books, and it's too often shoal water in your pockets to help any one—more especially since you have just been spliced to a pretty young body—that will want all your spare coppers."

"But I am master of my own fortune," said Griffith, "and am rich."

"Ay, ay, I have heard it said you could build a frigate and set her afloat all a-taunt-o without thrusting your hand—into any man's purse—but your own!"

"And I pledge you the honor of a naval officer," continued the young sailor, "that she shall want for nothing; not even the care and tenderness of a dutiful son."

Boltrope appeared to be choking; he made an attempt to raise his exhausted frame on the couch; but fell back exhausted and dying, perhaps a little prematurely, through the powerful and unusual emotions that were struggling for utterance. "God forgive me my misdeeds!" he at length said, "and chiefly for ever speaking a word against your discipline; remember the best bower—and look to the slings of the lower yards—and—and—he'll do it, Dicky, he'll do it! I'm casting off—the fasts—of life—and so God bless ye all—and give ye good weather—going large—or on a bowline!"

The tongue of the master failed him, but a look of heart-felt satisfaction gleamed across his rough visage, as its muscles

suddenly contracted, when the faded lineaments slowly settled into the appalling stiffness of death.

Griffith directed the body to be removed to the apartment of the master, and proceeded with a heavy heart to the upper deck. The *Alacrity* had been unnoticed during the arduous chase of the frigate, and, favored by daylight, and her light draught of water, she had easily effected her escape also among the mazes of the shoals. She was called down to her consort by signal, and received the necessary instructions how to steer during the approaching night. The British ships were now only to be faintly discovered, like small white specks on the dark sea; and, as it was known that a broad barrier of shallow water lay between them, the Americans no longer regarded their presence as at all dangerous.

When the necessary orders had been given, and the vessels were fully prepared, they were once more brought up to the wind, and their heads pointed in the direction of the coast of Holland. The wind, which freshened toward the decline of day, hauled round with the sun; and when that luminary retreated from the eye, so rapid had been the progress of the mariners, it seemed to sink in the bosom of the ocean, the land having long before settled into its watery bed. All night the frigate continued to dash through the seas with a sort of sullen silence, that was soothing to the melancholy of Cecilia and Katherine, neither of whom closed an eye during that gloomy period. In addition to the scene they had witnessed, their feelings were harrowed by the knowledge that, in conformity to the necessary plans of Griffith, and in compliance with the new duties he had assumed, they were to separate in the morning for an indefinite period, and possibly for ever.

With the appearance of light, the boatswain sent his rough summons through the vessel, and the crew were collected in solemn silence in her gangways, to "bury the dead." The bodies of Boltrope, of one or two of her inferior officers, and of several common men who had died of their wounds in the night, were, with the usual formalities, committed to the deep; when the yards of the ship were again braced by the wind, and she glided along the trackless waste, leaving no memorial, in the midst of the ever-rolling waters, to mark the place of their sepulture.

When the sun had gained the meridian, the vessels were once more hove-to, and the preparations were made for a final separation. The body of Colonel Howard was transferred to the *Alacrity*, whither it was followed by Griffith and his cheerless bride, while Katherine hung fondly from a window of the ship, suffering her own scalding tears to mingle with the brine of the ocean. After everything was arranged, Griffith waved his hand to Barnstable, who had now succeeded to the command of the frigate, and the yards of the latter were braced sharp to the wind, when she proceeded to the dangerous experiment of forcing her way to the shores of America, by attempting the pass of the Straits of Dover, and running the gauntlet through the English ships that crowded their own channel—an undertaking, however, for which she had the successful example of the *Alliance* frigate, which had borne the stars of America along the same hazardous path but a few months previously.

In the meanwhile the *Alacrity*, steering more to the west, drew in swiftly toward the shores of Holland; and, about an hour before the setting of the sun, had approached so nigh as to be once more hove into the wind, in obedience to the mandate of Griffith. A small, light boat was lowered into the sea, when the young sailor and the pilot, who had found his way into the cutter unheeded, and almost unseen, ascended from the small cabin together. The stranger glanced his eyes along the range of the coast, as if he would ascertain the exact position of the vessel, and then turned them on the sea and the western horizon to scan the weather. Finding nothing in the appearance of the latter to induce him to change his determination, he offered his hand frankly to Griffith, and said: "Here we part. As our acquaintance has not led to all we wished, let it be your task, sir, to forget we ever met."

Griffith bowed respectfully, but in silence, when the other continued, shaking his hand contemptuously toward the land:

"Had I but a moiety of the navy of that degenerate republic, the proudest among these haughty islanders should tremble in his castle, and be made to feel there is no security against a foe that trusts his own strength and knows the weakness of his enemy! But," he muttered, in a lower and more hurried voice, "this has been like Liverpool, and—Whitehaven—and Edinburgh, and fifty more! it is past, sir; let it be forgotten."

Without heeding the wondering crew, who were collected as curious spectators of his departure, the stranger bowed hastily to Griffith, and, springing into the boat, he spread her light sails with the readiness of one who had nothing to learn even in the smallest matters of his daring profession. Once more, as the boat moved briskly away from the cutter, he waved his hand in adieu; and Griffith fancied, that even through the distance he could trace a smile of bitter resignation lighting his calm features with a momentary gleam. For a long time the young man stood an abstracted gazer at his solitary progress, watching the small boat as it glided toward the open ocean; nor did he remember to order the head-sheets of the *Alacrity* drawn, in order to put the vessel again in motion, until the dark speck was lost in the strong glare that fell obliquely across the water from the setting sun.

Many wild and extraordinary conjectures were uttered among the crew of the cutter, as she slowly drew in toward her friendly haven, on the appearance of the mysterious pilot, during their late hazardous visit to the coast of Britain, and on his still more extraordinary disappearance, as it were, amid the stormy wastes of the North Sea. Griffith himself was not observed to smile, nor to manifest any evidence of his being a listener to their rude discourse, until it was loudly announced that a small boat was pressing for their own harbor across the fore-foot of the cutter, under a single lug-sail. Then, indeed, the sudden and cheerful lighting of his troubled eye betrayed the vast relief that was imparted to his feelings by the interesting discovery.

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Come all ye kindred chieftains of the deep,
In mighty phalanx round your brother bend;
Hush every murmur that invades his sleep—
And guard the laurels that o'ershade your friend!"
—LINES ON TRIPP.

HERE, perhaps, it would be wise to suffer the curtain of our imperfect drama to fall before the reader, trusting that the imagination of every individual can readily supply the due proportions of health, wealth, and happiness, that the rigid rules of poetic justice would award to the different characters of the legend. But as we are not disposed to part so coldly from those with whom we have long held amicable intercourse, and as there is no portion of that in reservation which is not quite as true as all that has been already related, we see no unanswerable reason for dismissing the *dramatis personæ* so abruptly. We shall, therefore, proceed to state briefly the outlines of that which befell them in after-life, regretting, at the same time, that the legitimate limits of a modern tale will not admit of such a dilatation of many a merry or striking scene, as might create the pleasing hope of beholding hereafter some more of our rude sketches quickened into life by the spirited pencil of Dunlap.

Following the course of the frigate, then, toward those shores from which, perhaps, we should never have suffered our truant pen to have wandered, we shall commence the brief task with Barnstable, and his laughing, weeping, gay, but affectionate bride—the black-eyed Katherine. The ship fought her way gallantly, through swarms of the enemy's cruisers, to the port of Boston, where Barnstable was rewarded for his services by promotion, and a more regular authority to command his vessel.

During the remainder of the war, he continued to fill that station with ability and zeal; nor did he return to the dwelling of his fathers, which he soon inherited,

by regular descent, until after peace had established not only the independence of his country, but his own reputation as a brave and successful sea-officer. When the Federal Government laid the foundation of its present navy, Captain Barnstable was once more tempted by the offer of a new commission to desert his home; and for many years he was employed among that band of gallant seamen who served their country so faithfully in times of trial and high daring. Happily, however, he was enabled to accomplish a great deal of the more peaceful part of his service, accompanied by Katherine, who, having no children, eagerly profited by his consent to share his privations and hardships on the ocean. In this manner they passed, merrily, and we trust happily, down the vale of life together, Katherine entirely discrediting the ironical prediction of her former guardian, by making, everything considered, a very obedient, and certainly, so far as attachment was concerned, a most devoted wife.

The boy, Merry, who in due time became a man, clung to Barnstable and Katherine, so long as it was necessary to hold him in leading strings; and when he received his regular promotion, his first command was under the shadow of his kinsman's broad pennant. He proved to be in his meridian, what his youth had so strongly indicated, a fearless, active, and reckless sailor; and his years might have extended to this hour, had he not fallen untimely in a duel with a foreign officer.

The first act of Captain Manual, after landing once more on his native soil, was to make interest to be again restored to the line of the army. He encountered but little difficulty in this attempt, and was soon in possession of the complete enjoyment of that which his soul had so long pined after, "a steady drill." He was in time to share in all the splendid successes which terminated the war, and also to participate in his due proportion of the misery of the army. His merits were not forgotten, however, in the reorganization of the forces, and he followed both St. Clair and his more fortunate successor, Wayne, in the Western campaigns. About the close of the century, when the British made their tardy relinquishment of the line of posts along the frontiers, Captain Manual was ordered to take charge, with his company, of a small stockade on our side of one of those mighty rivers that set bounds to the territories of the republic in the North. The British flag was waving over the ramparts of a more regular fortress that had been recently built, directly opposite, within the new lines of the Canadas. Manual was not a man to neglect the observances of military etiquette; and, understanding that the neighboring fort was commanded by a field-officer, he did not fail to wait on that gentleman in proper time, with a view to cultivate the sort of acquaintance that their mutual situations would render not only agreeable, but highly convenient.

The American martinet, in ascertaining the rank of the other, had not deemed it at all necessary to ask his name; but when the red-faced comical-looking officer with one leg, who met him, was introduced as Major Borroughcliffe, he had not the least difficulty in recalling to recollection his quondam acquaintance of St. Ruth. The intercourse between these worthies was renewed with remarkable gusto, and at length arrived to so regular a pass, that a log-cabin was erected on one of the islands in the river, as a sort of neutral territory, where their feastings and revels might be held without any scandal to the discipline of their respective garrisons. Here the qualities of many a saddle of savory venison were discussed, together with those of sundry pleasant fowls, as well as of divers strange beasts that inhabit those Western wilds, while, at the same time, the secret places of the broad river were vexed, that nothing might be wanting that could contribute to the pleasures of their banquets. A most equitable levy was regularly made on their respective pockets to sustain the foreign expenses of this amicable warfare; and a suitable division of labor was also imposed on the two commandants, in order to procure such articles of comfort as were only to be obtained from those portions of the globe

where the art of man had made a nearer approach to the bounties of Nature than in the vicinity of their fortifications. All liquids in which malt formed an ingredient, as well as the deep-colored wines of Oporto, were suffered to enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and were made to find their way, under the superintendence of Borroughcliffe, to their destined goal; but Manual was solely intrusted with the more important duty of providing the generous liquor of Maderia, without any other restriction on his judgment than an occasional injunction from his coadjutor that it should not fail to be the product of the "south side!"

It was not unusual for the young officers of the two garrisons to allude to the battle in which Major Borroughcliffe had lost his limb—the English ensign invariably whispered to the American, on such occasions, that it occurred during the late contest, in a desperate affair in the north-eastern coast of their island, in which the major commanded in behalf of his country, with great credit and signal success, and for which service he obtained his present rank "without purchase!" A sort of national courtesy prevented the two veterans, for by this time both had earned that honorable title, from participating at all in these delicate allusions; though, whenever, by any accident, they occurred near the termination of the revels, Borroughcliffe would so far betray his consciousness of what was passing, as to favor his American friend with a leer of singular significance, which generally produced in the other that sort of dull recollection which all actors and painters endeavor to represent by scratching the head. In this manner year after year rolled by, the most perfect harmony existing between the two posts, notwithstanding the angry passions that disturbed their respective countries, when an end was suddenly put to the intercourse by the unfortunate death of Manual.

This rigid observer of discipline never trusted his person on the neutral island without being accompanied by a party of his warriors, who were posted as a regular picket, sustaining a suitable line of sentries; a practice which he also recommended to his friend, as being highly conducive to discipline, as well as a salutary caution against a surprise on the part of either garrison. The major, however, dispensed with the formality in his own behalf, but was sufficiently good-natured to wink at the want of confidence it betrayed in his boon companion. On one unhappy occasion, when the discussions of a new importation had made a heavy inroad on the morning, Manual left the hut to make his way toward his picket, in such a state of utter mental aberration, as to forget the countersign when challenged by a sentinel, when, unhappily, he met his death by a shot from a soldier, whom he drilled to such an exquiste state of insensibility, that the man cared but little whether he killed friend or enemy so long as he kept within military usage and the hallowed limits established by the articles of war. He lived long enough, however, to commend the fellow for the deed, and died while delivering a eulogium to Borroughcliffe on the high state of perfection to which he had brought his command!

About a year before this melancholy event, a quarter cask of wine had been duly ordered from the south side of the island of Madeira, which was, at the death of Manual, toiling its weary way up the rapids of the Mississippi and the Ohio; having been made to enter by the port of New Orleans, with the intention of keeping it as long as possible under a genial sun! The untimely fate of his friend imposed on Borroughcliffe the necessity of attending to this precious relic of their mutual tastes; and he procured a leave of absence from his superior, with the laudable desire to proceed down the streams and superintend its further advance in person. The result of his zeal was a high fever, that set in the day after he reached his treasure; and as the doctor and the major espoused different theories in treating a disorder so dangerous in that climate —the one advising abstemiousness, and the other administering repeated draughts of the cordial that had drawn him so far from home—the disease was left to act its pleasure. Borroughcliffe died in three

days; and was carried back and interred by the side of his friend, in the very hut that had so often resounded with their humors and festivities! We have been thus particular in relating the sequel of the lives of these rival chieftains, because, from their want of connection with any kind heart of the other sex, no widows and orphans were left to lament their several ends; and furthermore, as they were both mortal, and might be expected to die at a suitable period, and yet did not terminate their career until each had attained the mature age of threescore, the reader can find no just grounds of dissatisfaction at being allowed this glance into the womb of Fate.

The chaplain abandoned the seas in time to retrieve his character, a circumstance which gave no little satisfaction to Katherine, who occasionally annoyed her worthy husband on the subject of the informality of their marriage.

Griffith and his mourning bride conveyed the body of Colonel Howard in safety to one of the principal towns in Holland, where it was respectfully and sorrowfully interred; after which the young man removed to Paris, with a view of erasing the sad images which the hurried and melancholy events of the few preceding days had left on the mind of his lovely companion. From this place Cecilia held communion, by letter, with her friend Alice Dunscombe; and such suitable provision was made in the affairs of her late uncle as the times would permit. Afterward, when Griffith obtained the command which had been offered him before sailing on the cruise in the North Sea, they returned together to America. The young man continued a sailor until the close of the war, when he entirely withdrew from the ocean, and devoted the remainder of his life to the conjoint duties of a husband and a good citizen.

As it was easy to reclaim the estates of Colonel Howard, which, in fact, had been abandoned more from pride than necessity, and which had never been confiscated, their joint inheritances made the young couple extremely affluent; and we shall here take occasion to say that Griffith remembered his promise to the dying master, and saw such provision made for the childless mother as her situation and his character required.

It might have been some twelve years after the short cruise, which it has been our task to record in these volumes, that Griffith, who was running his eye carelessly over a file of newspapers, was observed by his wife to drop the bundle from before his face, and pass his hand slowly across his brow, like a man who had been suddenly struck with renewed impressions of some former event, or who was endeavoring to recall to his mind images that had long since faded.

"See you anything in that paper to disturb you, Griffith?" said the still lovely Cecilia. "I hope that now we have our confederate government, the States will soon recover from their losses — but it is one of those plans to create a new navy that has met your eye! Ah! truant! you sigh to become a wanderer again, and pine after your beloved ocean!"

"I have ceased sighing and pining since you have begun to smile," he returned with a vacant manner, and without removing his hand from his brow.

"Is not the new order of things, then, likely to succeed? Does the Congress enter into contention with the President?"

"The wisdom and name of Washington will smooth the way for the experiment until time shall mature the system. Cecilia, do you remember the man who accompanied Manual and myself to St. Ruth, the night we became your uncle's prisoners, and who afterward led the party which liberated us and rescued Barnstable?"

"Surely I do; he was the pilot of your ship, it was then said; and I remember the shrewd soldier we entertained even suspected that he was one greater than he seemed."

"The soldier surmised the truth; but you saw him not on that fearful night when he carried us through the shoals; and you could not witness the calm courage with which he guided the ship into those very channels again, while the confusion of battle was among us!"

"I heard the dreadful din? And I can

easily imagine the horrid scene," returned his wife, her recollections chasing the color from her cheeks, even at that distance of time; "but what of him? is his name mentioned in those papers? Ah! they are English print! you called his name Gray, if I remember!"

"That is the name he bore with us. He was a man who had formed romantic notions of glory, and wished everything concealed in which he acted a part that he thought would not contribute to his renown. It has been, therefore, in compliance with a solemn promise made at the time, that I have ever avoided mentioning his name; he is now dead!"

"Can there have been any connection between him and Alice Dunscombe?" said Cecilia, dropping her work in her lap, in a thoughtful manner. "She met him alone, at her own urgent request, the night Katherine and myself saw you in your confinement, and even then my cousin whispered they were acquainted. The letter I received yesterday from Alice was sealed with black, and I was pained with the melancholy though gentle manner in which she wrote of passing from this world into another!"

Griffith glanced his eye at his wife with a look of sudden intelligence, and then answered, like one who began to see with the advantages of a clearer atmosphere:

"Cecilia, your conjecture is surely true. Fifty things rush to my mind at that one surmise—his acquaintance with that particular spot—his early life—his expedition—his knowledge of the Abbey, all confirm it! He, altogether, was indeed a man of marked character!"

"Why has he not been among us?" asked Cecilia; "he appeared devoted to our cause?"

"His devotion to America proceeded from desire of distinction, his ruling passion, and perhaps a little also from resentment of some injustice which he claimed to have suffered from his own countrymen. He was a man, and not therefore without foibles—among which may have been reckoned the estimation of his own acts; but they were most daring, and deserving of praise! neither did he at all merit the obloquy that he received from his enemies. His love of liberty may be more questionable; for if he commenced his deeds in the cause of these free States, they terminated in the service of a despot! He is now dead—but had he lived in times and under circumstances when his consummate knowledge of his profession, his cool, deliberate, and even desperate courage, could have been exercised in a regular and well-supported navy, and had the habits of his youth better qualified him to have borne, meekly, the honors he acquired in his age, he would have left behind him no name in its lists that would have descended to the latest posterity of his adopted countrymen with greater renown!"

"Why, Griffith," exclaimed Cecilia, in a little surprise, "you are zealous in his cause! Who was he?"

"A man who held a promise of secrecy while living, which is not at all released by his death. It is enough to know that he was greatly instrumental in procuring our sudden union, and that our happiness might have been wrecked in the voyage of life had we not met the unknown pilot of the German Ocean."

Perceiving her husband to rise, and carefully collect the papers in a bundle, before he left the room, Cecilia made no further remark at the time, nor was the subject ever revived between them.

THE END OF "THE PILOT."

THE RED ROVER.

CHAPTER I.

Par.—"Mars dote on you for his novices."
—ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

No one who is familiar with the bustle and activity of an American commercial town would recognize in the repose which now reigns in the ancient mart of Rhode Island, a place that, in its day, has been ranked among the most important ports along the whole line of our extended coast. It would seem, at the first glance, that Nature had expressly fashioned the spot to anticipate the wants and to realize the wishes of the mariner. Enjoying the four great requisites of a safe and commodious haven, a placid basin, an outer harbor, and a convenient roadstead with a clear offing, Newport appeared to the eyes of our European ancestors designed to shelter fleets, and to nurse a race of hardy and expert seamen. Though the anticipation has not been entirely disappointed, how little has reality answered to expectation in respect to the former! A successful rival has arisen, even in the immediate vicinity of this seeming favorite of Nature, to defeat all the calculations of mercantile sagacity, and to add another to the thousand existing evidences that "the wisdom of man is foolishness."

There are few towns of any magnitude, within our broad territories, in which so little change has been effected in half a century as in Newport. Until the vast resources of the interior were developed, the beautiful island on which it stands was a chosen retreat for the affluent planters of the south from the heats and diseases of their burning climate. Here they resorted in crowds to inhale the invigorating breezes of the sea. Subjects of the same government, the inhabitants of the Carolinas and of Jamaica met here in amity, to compare their respective habits and policies, and to strengthen each other in a common delusion, which the descendants of both, in the third generation, are beginning to perceive and to regret.

The communion left, on the simple and unpracticed offspring of the Puritans, its impression both of good and evil. The inhabitants of the country, while they derived from the intercourse a portion of that bland and graceful courtesy for which the gentry of the southern British colonies were so distinguished, did not fail to imbibe some of those peculiar notions concerning the distinctions in the races of men for which they are no less remarkable. Rhode Island was the foremost among the New England provinces to recede from the manners and opinions of their simple ancestors. The first shock was given through her to that rigid and ungracious deportment which was once believed a necessary concomitant of true religion, a sort of outward pledge of the healthful condition of the inward man; and it was also through her that the first palpable departure was made from those purifying principles which might serve as an apology for even more repulsive exteriors. By a singular combination of circumstances and qualities, which is, however, no less true than perplexing, the merchants of Newport were becoming, at the same time, both slave-dealers and gentlemen.

Whatever might have been the moral condition of its proprietors at the precise period of 1759, the island itself was never more enticing and lovely. Its swelling crests were still crowned with the wood

of centuries; its little vales were then covered with the living verdure of the north; and its unpretending, but neat and comfortable villas, lay sheltered in groves and imbedded in flowers. The beauty and fertility of the place gained for it a name which probably expressed far more than was properly understood at that early day. The inhabitants of the country styled their possessions the "Garden of America." Neither were their guests from the scorching plains of the south reluctant to concede this imposing title.

The appellation descended even to our time; nor was it entirely abandoned until the traveler had the means of contemplating the thousand broad and lovely valleys which, fifty years ago, lay buried in the dense shadows of the forest.

The date we have just named was a period fraught with the deepest interest to the British possessions on this continent. A bloody and vindictive war, which had been commenced in defeat and disgrace, was about to end in triumph. France was deprived of the last of her possessions on the main, while the immense region which lies between the Bay of Hudson and the territories of Spain submitted to the power of England. The colonists had shared largely in contributing to the success of the mother country. Losses and contumely, that had been incurred by the besetting prejudices of European commanders, were beginning to be forgotten in the pride of success. The blunders of Braddock, the indolence of Loudon, and the impotency of Abercrombie, were repaired by the vigor of Amherst and the genius of Wolfe. In every quarter of the globe the arms of Britain were triumphant. The loyal provincials were among the loudest in their exultations and rejoicings; willfully shutting their eyes to the scanty meed of applause that a powerful people ever reluctantly bestows on its dependents, as if love of glory, like avarice, increases by its means of indulgence.

The system of oppression and misrule, which hastened a separation that sooner or later must have occurred in the natural order of events, had not yet commenced. The mother country, if not just, was still complaisant. Like all old and great nations, she was indulging in the pleasing but dangerous enjoyment of self-comtemplation. The qualities and services of a race who were believed to be inferior were, however, soon forgotten; or, if remembered, it was in order to be misrepresented and vituperated. As this feeling increased with the discontent of the civil dissensions, it led to still more striking injustice and greater folly. Men who, from their observations, should have known better, were not ashamed to proclaim, even in the highest council of the nation, their ignorance of the character of a people with whom they had mingled their blood. Self-esteem gave value to the opinions of fools. It was under this soothing infatuation that veterans were heard to disgrace their noble profession by boastings that should have been hushed in the mouth of a soldier of the carpet; it was under this infatuation that Burgoyne gave, in the Commons of England, that memorable promise of marching from Quebec to Boston with a force he saw fit to name—a pledge that he afterward redeemed by going over the same ground, with twice the number of followers as captives; and it was under this infatuation that England subsequently threw away her hundred thousand lives and lavished her millions of treasure.

The history of that memorable struggle is familiar to every American. Content with the knowledge that his country triumphed, he is willing to let the glorious result take its proper place in the pages of history. He sees that his empire rests on a broad and natural foundation, which needs no support from venal pens; and happily for his peace of mind, no less than for his character, he feels that the prosperity of the republic is not to be sought in the degradation of surrounding nations.

Our present purpose leads us back to the period of calm which preceded the storm of the Revolution. In the early days of the month of October, 1759, Newport, like every other town in America,

was filled with the mingled sentiments of grief and joy. The inhabitants mourned the fall of Wolfe, while they triumphed in his victory. Quebec, the stronghold of the Canadas, and the last place of any importance held by a people whom they had been educated to believe were their natural enemies, had just changed its masters. That loyalty to the crown of England, which endured so much before the strange principle became extinct, was then at its height; and probably the colonist was not to be found who did not, in some measure, identify his own honor with the fancied glory of the house of Brunswick.

The day on which the action of our tale commences had been expressly set apart to manifest the sympathy of the good people of the town and its vicinity in the success of the royal arms. It had opened as thousands of days have opened since, with the ringing of bells and the firing of cannon; and the population, at an early hour, had poured into the streets of the place, with that determined zeal in the cause of merriment, which ordinarily makes preconcerted joy so dull an amusement. The chosen orator of the day had exhibited his eloquence in a sort of prosaic monody in praise of the dead hero, and had sufficiently manifested his loyalty by laying the glory, not only of that sacrifice, but all that had been reaped by so many thousands of his brave companions also, most humbly at the foot of the throne.

Content with these demonstrations of their allegiance, the inhabitants began to retire to their dwellings, as the sun settled toward the immense regions which then lay an endless and unexplored wilderness, but which now are teeming with the fruits and enjoyments of civilized life. The countrymen from the environs, and even from the adjoining main, were beginning to turn their faces toward their distant homes, with that frugal care which still distinguishes the inhabitants of this portion of our country even in the midst of their greatest abandonment to pleasures, in order that the approaching evening might not lead them into expenditures which were not deemed germane to the proper feelings of the occasion. In short, the excess of the hour was past, and each individual was returning into the sober channels of his ordinary avocations, with an earnestness and discretion which proved he was not altogether unmindful of the time that had been squandered in the display of a spirit that he already appeared half disposed to consider as supererogatory.

The sounds of the hammer, the ax, and the saw were again heard in the place; the windows of more than one shop were half opened, as if its owner had made a sort of compromise between his interests and his conscience, and the masters of the only three inns in the town were to be seen standing before their doors, regarding the retiring countrymen with eyes which plainly betrayed that they were seeking customers among a people who were always much more ready to sell than to buy. A few noisy and thoughtless seamen, belonging to the vessels in the haven, together with some half dozen notorious tavern-hunters, were, however, the sole fruits of all their nods of recognition, inquiries into the welfare of wives and children, and, in some instances, of open invitations to alight and drink.

Worldly care, with a constant though sometimes an oblique look at the future state, formed the great characteristic of all that people who then dwelt in what were called the provinces of New England. Still the business of the day was not forgotten, though it was deemed unnecessary to digest its proceedings in idleness, or over the bottle. The travelers along the different roads that led into the interior of the island formed themselves into little knots, in which the policy of the great national events they had just been commemorating, and the manner in which they had been treated by the different individuals selected to take the lead in the offices of the day, were freely handled, though with great deference to the established reputations of the distinguished parties most concerned. It was everywhere conceded that the prayers, which had been in truth a little conversational and historical, were faultless and searching exercises; and, on the whole (though to

this opinion there were some clients of an advocate adverse to the orator who were moderate dissenters), it was established, that a more eloquent oration had never issued from the mouth of man than had that day been delivered in their presence. Precisely in the same temper was the subject discussed by the workmen on a ship which was then building in the harbor, and which, in the same spirit of provincial admiration that has since immortalized so many edifices, bridges, and even individuals within their precincts, was confidently affirmed to be the rarest specimen then extant of the nice proportions of naval architecture!

Of the orator himself it may be necessary to say a word, in order that so remarkable an intellectual prodigy should fill his proper place in our frail and short-lived catalogue of the worthies of that day. He was the usual oracle of his neighborhood, when a condensation of its ideas on any great event, like the one just mentioned, became necessary. His learning was justly computed, by comparison, to be of the most profound and erudite character; and it was very truly affirmed to have astonished more than one European scholar, who had been tempted by a fame which, like heat, was only the more intense from its being so confined, to grapple with him on the arena of ancient literature. He was a man who knew how to improve these high gifts to his exclusive advantage. In but one instance had he ever been thrown enough off his guard to commit an act that had a tendency to depress the reputation he had thus gained; and that was, in permitting one of his labored flights of eloquence to be printed; or, as his more witty though less successful rival, the only other lawyer in the place, expressed it, in suffering one of the *fugitive* essays to be *caught*. But even this experiment, whatever might have been its effects abroad, served to confirm his renown at home. He now stood before his admirers in the dignity of types; and it was in vain for that miserable tribe of "animalculæ, who live by feeding on the body of genius," to attempt to undermine a reputation that was embalmed in the faith of so many parishes. The brochure was diligently scattered through the provinces, lauded around the teapot, openly extolled in the prints—by some kindred spirit, as was manifest in the similarity of style—and, by one believer, more zealous or perhaps more interested than the rest, it was actually put on board the next ship which sailed for "home," as England was then affectionately termed, inclosed in an envelope which bore an address no less imposing than that of the Majesty of Britain. Its effects on the straightgoing mind of the dogmatic German who then filled the throne of the Conqueror were never actually known, though they who were in the secret of the transmission, long looked in vain for the signal reward that was to follow so favorable an exhibition of human intellect.

Notwithstanding these high and beneficent gifts, their possessor was now as unconsciously engaged in that portion of his professional labors which bore the strongest resemblance to the occupation of a scrivener, as if Nature, in bestowing such rare endowments, had denied him the phrenological quality of self-esteem. A critical observer might, however, have seen, or fancied that he saw, in the forced humility of his countenance, certain gleamings of a triumph that might not be traced to the fall of Quebec. The habit of appearing meek had, however, united with a frugal regard for the precious and irreclaimable minutes, in producing the extraordinary diligence in a pursuit of a character that was so humble when compared with his recent mental efforts.

Leaving this gifted favorite of fortune and nature, we shall now pass to an entirely different individual, and to another quarter of the place. The spot to which we wish to transport the reader, was neither more nor less than the shop of a tailor, who did not disdain to perform the most minute offices of his vocation in his own heedful person. The humble edifice stood at no great distance from the water, in the skirts of the town, and in such a situation as to enable its occupant to look out upon the loveliness of the inner basin, and, through a vista cut by

the elements between islands, even upon the lake-like scenery of the outer harbor. A small, though little frequented wharf, lay before its door; while a certain air of negligence, and the absence of bustle, sufficiently manifested that the place itself was not the immediate site of the much-boasted commercial prosperity of the port.

The afternoon was like a morning in spring, the breeze which occasionally rippled the basin possessing that peculiar bland influence which is so often felt in the American autumn; and the worthy mechanic labored at his calling, seated on his shop-board at an open window, far better satisfied with himself than many of those whose fortune it is to be placed in state, beneath canopies of velvet and gold. On the outer side of the little building, a tall, awkward, but vigorous and well-formed countryman was lounging, with one shoulder placed against the side of the shop, as if his legs found the task of supporting his heavy frame too grievous to be endured without assistance, seemingly in waiting for the completion of the garment at which the other toiled, and with which he intended to adorn his person in an adjoining parish on the succeeding Sabbath.

In order to render the minutes shorter, and possibly in the indulgence of a very ungovernable propensity to talk, of which he who wielded the needle was somewhat the subject, but few of the passing moments were suffered to escape without a word from one or other of the parties. As the subject of their discourse had a direct reference to the principal matter of our tale, we shall take leave to give such portions of it to the reader as we deem most relevant to a clear exposition of that which is to follow. The latter will always bear in mind, that he who worked was a man drawing into the wane of life; that he bore about him the appearance of one who, either from incompetency or from some fatality of fortune, had been doomed to struggle through the world, keeping poverty from his residence only by the aid of great industry and rigid frugality; and that the idler was a youth of that age and condition that the acquisition of an entire set of habiliments formed a sort of era in his adventures.

"Yes," exclaimed the indefatigable shaper of cloth, a species of sign, which might have been equally construed into an evidence of the fulness of his mental enjoyment, or of the success of his bodily labors, struggling for his lips; "yes, smarter things may have fallen from the lips of man, than such as the squire poured out to day, but we in the provinces have never heard them. When he spoke of the plains of Father Abraham, and of the smoke and thunder of the battle, Pardon, it stirred up such stomachy feelings in my bosom, that I verily believe I could have had the heart to throw aside the thimble, and go forth myself, to seek glory in battling for the cause of the King."

The youth, whose Christian or "given" name, as it is now generally termed in New England, had been intended, by his pious sponsors, humbly to express his future hopes, turned his head toward the heroic tailor, with an expression of drollery about the eyes that proved Nature had not been niggardly in the gift of humor, however the quality was suppressed by the restraints of a very peculiar manner, and no less peculiar education.

"There's an opening now, neighbor Homespun, for an ambitious man," he said, "since his Majesty has lost his stoutest general."

"Yes, yes," returned the individual who, either in his youth or in his age, had made so capital a blunder in the choice of a profession, "a fine and promising chance it is for one who counts only five-and-twenty; but most of my days have gone by, and I must spend the rest of them here, where you see me, between buckram and osnaburghs—who put the dye into this cloth, Pardy?—it is the best laid in bark I've handled this fall."

"Let the old woman alone for giving the lasting color to her web; I'll engage, neighbor Homespun, provided you furnish the proper fit, there'll not be a better dressed lad on the island than my own mother's son! But, sin' you cannot be a

general, goodman, you'll have the comfort of knowing there'll be no more fighting without you. Everybody agrees that the French won't hold out much longer, and then we must have a peace for want of enemies."

"So best, so best, boy; for one who has seen as much of the horrors of war as I, knows how to put a rational value on the blessings of tranquillity!"

"Then you aren't altogether unacquainted, goodman, with the new trade you thought of setting up?"

"I!—I have been through five long and bloody wars, and I've reason to thank God that I've gone through them all without a scratch as big as one this needle would make. Five long and bloody, aye, and I may say glorious wars, have I lived through in safety!"

"A perilous time it must have been for you, neighbor. But I don't remember to have heard of more than two quarrels with the Frenchmen in my day."

"You are but a boy compared to one who has seen the end of his third score of years. Here is this war that is now so likely to be soon ended. Heaven, which rules all things in wisdom, be praised for the same! Then there was the business of '45, when the old *Warren* sailed up and down our coasts; a scourge to his Majesty's enemies, and a safeguard to all loyal subjects. Then, there was a business in Germany, concerning which we had awful accounts of battles fou't, in which men were mowed down like grass falling before a strong arm. That makes three;" cocking his spectacles, and counting with his thimble on the fingers of the other hand. "The fourth was the rebellion of '15, of which I pretend not to have seen much, being but a youth at the time; and the fifth was a dreadful rumor that was spread through the province, of a general rising among the blacks and Indians, which was to sweep all us Christians into eternity at a minute's warning!"

"Well, I had always reckoned you for a home-staying and a peaceable man, neighbor," returned the admiring countryman; "nor did I ever dream that you had seen these serious movings."

"I have not boasted. Pardon, or I might have added other heavy matters on the list. There was a great struggle in the east, no longer than the year '32, for the Persian throne. You have read of the laws of the Medes and the Persians: well, for the very throne that gave forth those unalterable laws was there a frightful struggle, in which blood ran like water; but, as it was not in Christendom, I do not account it among my own experience; though I might have spoken of the Porteous mob with great reason, as it took place in another portion of the very kingdom in which I lived."

"You must have journeyed much, and have been stirring late and early, goodman, to have seen all these things, and to have got no harm?"

"I've been something of a traveler, too, Pardy. Twice I have been overland to Boston, and once have I sailed through the great Sound of Long Island, down to the town of York. It is an awful undertaking, the latter, as it respects the distance, and more especially because it is needful to pass a place that is likened, by its name, to the entrance of Tophet."

"I have often heard the spot called 'Hell Gate' spoken of; and I may say, too, that I know a man *well* who has been through it twice; once in going to York, and once in coming homeward."

"He had enough of it, as I'll engage! Did he tell you of the pot which tosses and roars as if the biggest of Beelzebub's fires was burning beneath, and of the hog's back over which the water pitches, as it may tumble over the Great Falls of the West? Owing to reasonable skill in our seamen, and uncommon resolution in the passengers, we happily had a good time of it through ourselves; though I care not who knows it, I will own it is a severe trial to the courage to enter that dreadful strait. We cast out our anchors at certain islands, which lie a few furlongs this side the place, and sent the pinnace, with the captain and two stout seamen, to reconnoiter the spot in order to see if it were in a peaceful state or not. The report being favorable, the passengers were landed, and the vessel was got through,

by the blessing of Heaven, in safety. We had all reason to rejoice that the prayers of the congregation were asked before we departed from the peace and security of our own homes!"

"You journeyed round the 'Gate' on foot?" demanded the attentive boor.

"Certain! It would have been a sinful and a blasphemous tempting of Providence to have done otherwise, seeing that our duty called us to no sacrifice. But all that danger is gone by, and so, I trust, will that of this bloody war, in which we have both been actors; and then I humbly hope his sacred Majesty will have leisure to turn his royal mind to the pirates who infest the coast, and to order some of his stout naval captains to mete out to the rogues the treatment they are so fond of giving to others. It would be a joyful sight to my old eyes to see the famous and long-hunted *Red Rover* brought into this very port towing at the poop of a king's cruiser."

"And is it a desperate villain, he of whom you now make mention?"

"He! There are many he's in that one lawless ship, and bloody-minded and nefarious thieves are they to the smallest boy. It is heart-searching and grievous, Pardy, to hear of their evil-doings on the high seas of the King!"

"I have often heard mention made of the Rover," returned the countryman; "but never to enter into any of the intricate particulars of his knavery."

"How should you, boy, who live up in the country, know so much of what is passing on the great deep, as we who dwell in a port that is resorted to by mariners? I am fearful you'll be making it late home, Pardon," he added, glancing his eye at certain lines drawn on his shopboard, by the aid of which he was enabled to note the progress of the setting sun. "It is drawing toward the hour of five, and you have twice that number of miles to go, before you can, by any manner of means, reach the nearest boundary of your father's farm."

"The road is plain, and the people honest," returned the countryman, who cared not if it were midnight provided he could be the bearer of particulars of some dreadful sea robbery to the ears of those he well knew would flock around him, at his return, to hear the tidings from the port. "And is he, in truth, so much feared and sought for as people say?"

"Is he sought for! Is Tophet sought by a praying Christian? Few there are on the mighty deep, let them even be as stout for battle as was Joshua, the great Jewish captain, that would not rather behold the land than see the top-gallants of that wicked pirate! Men fight for glory, Pardon, as I may say I have seen, after living through so many wars; but none love to meet an enemy who hoists a bloody flag at the first blow, and who is ready to cast both parties into the air, when he finds the hand of Satan has no longer the mind to help him."

"If the rogue is so desperate," returned the youth, straightening his powerful limbs, with a look of rising pride, "why do not the island and plantations fit a coaster in order to bring him in, that he might get sight of a wholesome gibbet? Let the drum beat on such a message through our neighborhood, and I'll engage that it don't leave it without one volunteer at least."

"So much for not having seen war! Of what use would flails and pitchforks prove against men who have sold themselves to the devil? Often has the *Rover* been seen at night, or just as the sun was going down, by the King's cruisers, who, having fairly surrounded the thieves, had good reason to believe that they had them already in the bilboes; but when the morning has come, the prize was vanished, by fair means or by foul!"

"And are the villains so bloody-minded that they are called 'Red?'"

"Such is the title of their leader," returned the worthy tailor, who by this time was swelling with the importance of possessing so interesting a legend to communicate; "and such is also the name they give to his vessel; because no man who has put a foot on board her has ever come back to say that she has a better or a worse; that is, no honest mariner or

lucky voyager. The ship is of the size of a King's sloop, they say, and of like equipments and form; but she has miraculously escaped from the hands of many a gallant frigate; and once, it is whispered, for no loyal subject would like to say so scandalous a thing openly, Pardon, that she lay under the guns of a fifty for an hour, and seemingly, to all eyes, she sunk like hammered lead to the bottom. But just as everybody was shaking hands, and wishing his neighbor joy at so happy a punishment coming over the knaves, a West Indiaman came into port, that had been robbed by the *Rover* on the morning after the night in which it was thought they had all gone into eternity together. And what makes the matter worse, boy, while the King's ship was careening with her keel out to stop the holes of cannon-balls, the pirate was sailing up and down the coast, as sound as the day the wrights first turned her from their hands!"

"Well, this is unheard of!" returned the countryman, on whom the tale was making a sensible impression. "Is she a well-turned and comely ship to the eye? or is it by any means certain that she is an actual living vessel at all?"

"Opinions differ. Some say, yes; some say, no. But I am well acquainted with a man who traveled a week in company with a mariner, who passed within a hundred fathoms of her in a gale of wind. Lucky it was for them that the hand of the Lord was felt so powerfully on the deep, and that the *Rover* had enough to do to keep his own ship from foundering. The acquaintance of my friend had a good view of both vessel and captain, therefore, in perfect safety. He said that the pirate was a man maybe half as big again as the tall preacher over on the main, with hair of the color of the sun in a fog, and eyes that no man would like to look upon the second time. He saw him as plain as I see you; for the knave stood in the rigging of his ship, beckoning with a hand as big as a coat-flap, for the honest trader to keep off, in order that the two vessels might not do one another damage by coming foul."

"He was a bold mariner, that trader, to go so nigh such a merciless rogue."

"I warrant you, Pardon, it was desperately against his will! But it was on a night so dark——"

"Dark!" interrupted the other, who had the inquisitive shrewdness of a New Englander, notwithstanding his disposition to credulity; "by what contrivance, then, did he manage to see so well?"

"No man can say!" answered the tailor, "but see he did, just in the manner and the very things I have named to you. More than that, he took good note of the vessel, that he might know her, if chance or Providence should ever happen to throw her again in his way. She was a long black ship, lying low in the water, like a snake in the grass, with a desperate wicked look, and altogether of dishonest dimensions. Then everybody says that she appears to sail faster than the clouds above, seeming to care little which way the wind blows, and that no one is a jot safer from her speed than her honesty. According to all that I have heard, she is something such a craft as yonder slaver that has been lying the week past, the Lord knows why, in our outer harbor."

As the gossiping tailor had necessarily lost many precious moments in relating the preceding history, he now set about redeeming them with the utmost diligence, keeping time to the rapid movement of his needle-hand by corresponding jerks of his head and shoulders. In the meanwhile, the bumpkin, whose wondering mind was by this time charged nearly to bursting with what he had heard, turned his look toward the vessel the other had pointed out, in order to get the only image that was now required to enable him to do credit to so moving a tale, suitably engraved on his imagination. There was necessarily a pause, while the respective parties were thus severally occupied. It was suddenly broken by the tailor, who clipped the thread with which he had just finished the garment, cast everything from his hands, threw his spectacles upon his forehead, and, leaning his arms on his knees in such a manner as to form a perfect labyrinth with the limbs, he stretched

his body forward so far as to lean out of the window, riveting his eyes also on the ship which still attracted the gaze of his companion.

"Do you know, Pardy," he said, "that strange thoughts and cruel misgivings have come over me concerning that very vessel? They say she is a slaver come in for wood and water, and there she has been a week, and not a stick bigger than an oar has gone up her side; and I'll engage that ten drops from Jamaica have gone on board her to one from the spring. Then, you may see, she is anchored in such a way that but one of the guns from the battery can touch her; whereas, had she been a real timid trader, she would naturally have got into a place where, if a straggling picaroon should come into port, he would have found her in the very hottest of the fire."

"You have an ingenious turn with you, goodman," returned the wondering countryman: "now a ship might have lain on the battery-island, and I would have hardly noticed the thing."

"'Tis use and experience, Pardon, that makes men of us all. I should know something of batteries, having seen so many wars, and I served a campaign of a week in that very fort, when the rumor came that the French were sending cruisers from Louisburg down the coast. For that matter my duty was to stand sentinel over that very cannon; and if I have done the thing once, I have twenty times squinted along the piece to see in what quarter it would send its shot, provided such a calamity should arrive as that it might become necessary to fire it, loaded with real warlike balls."

"And who are these?" demanded Pardon, with that species of sluggish curiosity which had been awakened by the wonders related by the other; "are these mariners of the slaver, or are they idle Newporters?"

"They!" exclaimed the tailor; "sure enough they are new-comers; it may be well to have a closer look at them in these troublesome times! Here, Nab, take the garment and press down the seams, you idle hussy; for neighbor Hopkins is straitened for time, while your tongue is going like a young lawyer's in a justice's court. Don't be sparing of your elbow, girl; for it's no Indian muslin that you'll have under the iron, but cloth that would do to side a house with. Ah! your mother's loom, Pardy, robs the seamster of many an honest job."

Having thus transferred the remainder of the job from his own hands to those of an awkward, pouting girl, who was compelled to abandon her gossip with a neighbor, in order to obey his injunctions, he quickly removed his own person, notwithstanding a miserable limp with which he had come into the world, from the shopboard to the open air. As more important characters are, however, to be introduced to the reader, we shall defer the ceremony to the opening of another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Sir Toby.—"Excellent! I smell a device."
—TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE strangers were three in number; for strangers the goodman Homespun, who knew not only the names but most of the private histories of every man and woman within ten miles of his own residence, immediately proclaimed them to be in a whisper to his companion; and strangers, too, of a mysterious and threatening aspect. In order that others may have an opportunity of judging of the probability of the latter conjecture, it becomes necessary that a more minute account should be given of the respective appearances of these individuals, who, unhappily for their reputations, temporarily at least, had the misfortune to be unknown to the gossiping tailor of Newport.

The one by far the most imposing in his general mien, was a youth who had apparently seen some six or seven and twenty seasons. That those seasons had not been entirely made of sunny days and nights of repose, was betrayed by the tinges of brown which had been laid on his features, layer after layer, in such constant succession, as to have changed to a deep olive a

complexion which had once been fair, and through which the rich blood was still mantling with the finest glow of vigorous health. His features were rather noble and manly than distinguished for their exactness and symmetry; his nose being far more bold and prominent than regular in its form, with his brows projecting, and sufficiently marked to give to the whole of the superior parts of his face that decided intellectual expression which is already becoming so common to American physiognomy. The mouth was firm and manly; and, while he muttered to himself and smiled as the curious tailor drew slowly nigher, it discovered a set of glittering teeth, that shone the brighter from being cased in so dark a setting.

The hair was jet black, in thick and confused ringlets; and the eyes were very little larger than common, gray, and, though evidently of a changing expression, rather leaning to mildness than severity. The form of this young man was of that happy size which unites activity with strength. It seemed to be well knit, while it was justly proportioned and graceful. Though these several personal qualifications were exhibited under the disadvantages of the perfectly simple, though neat and rather tastefully disposed attire of a common mariner, they were sufficiently imposing to cause the suspicious dealer in buckram to hesitate before he would venture to address the stranger, whose eye appeared fastened, by a species of fascination, on the reputed slaver in the outer harbor. A curl of the upper lip, and another inexplicable smile, in which some strong feeling was mingled with his mutterings, decided the vacillating mind of the good man. Without venturing to disturb a reverie that seemed so profound, he left the youth leaning against the head of the pile where he had long been standing, perfectly unconsious of the presence of an intruder, and turned a little hastily to examine the rest of the party.

One of the remaining two was a white man, and the other a negro. Both had passed the middle age; and both, in their appearances, furnished the strongest proofs of long exposure to the severity of many climates and to numberless tempests. They were dressed in the plain, weather-soiled, and tarred habiliments of common seamen, bearing about their persons the other unerring evidences of their peculiar profession. The former was of a short, thick-set, powerful frame, in which, by a happy ordering of Nature, a little confirmed, perhaps, by long habits, the strength was principally seated about the broad and brawny shoulders and sinewy arms; as if, in the construction of the man, the inferior members had been considered of little other use than to transfer the superior to the different situations in which the former were to display their energies. His head was in proportion to the more immediate members; the forehead low and nearly covered with hair; the eyes small, obstinate, sometimes fierce, and often dull; the nose, snub, coarse, and vulgar; the mouth large and voracious; the teeth short, clean, and even expressive. This singularly constructed personage had taken his seat on an empty barrel, and, with folded arms, he sat examining the often-mentioned slaver, occasionally favoring his companion, the black, with such remarks as were suggested by his observation and experience.

The negro occupied a more humble post; one better suited to his subdued habits and inclinations. In stature, and the peculiar diversion of animal force, there was a great resemblance between the two, with the exception that the latter enjoyed advantages in height, and even in proportions. While Nature had stamped on his lineaments those distinguishing marks which characterize the race from which he sprang, she had not done it to that revolting degree to which her displeasure against that stricken people is sometimes carried. His features were more elevated than common; his eye was mild, easily excited to joy, and, like that of his companion, sometimes humorous. His head was beginning to be sprinkled with gray, his skin had lost the shining jet color which had distinguished it in his youth, and all his limbs and movements bespoke a man whose

frame had been equally indurated and stiffened by toil. He sat on a low stone, and seemed intently employed in tossing pebbles into the air, showing his dexterity by catching them in the hand from which they had just been cast; an amusement which betrayed alike the natural tendency of his mind to seek pleasure in trifles, and the absence of the more elevating feelings which are the fruits of education. The process, however, furnished a striking exhibition of the physical force of the negro. In order to conduct this trivial pursuit without incumbrance, he had rolled the sleeve of his light canvas jacket to the elbow, laying bare, by the act, an arm that might have served as a model for the limb of Hercules.

There was certainly nothing sufficiently imposing about the person of either of these individuals to repel the investigations of one as much influenced by curiosity as was our tailor. Instead, however, of yielding directly to the strong impulse, the honest shaper of cloth chose to direct his advance in a manner that should give the bumpkin a striking proof of his sagacity. After making a sign of caution and intelligence to the latter, he approached slowly from behind with a light step, that might give him an opportunity of hearing any secret that should unwittingly fall from either of the seamen. His forethought was followed by no very important results, though it served to supply his suspicions with all the additional testimony of the treachery of their characters that could be furnished by evidence so simple as the mere sound of their voices. As to the words themselves, though the good man believed they might possibly contain treason, he was compelled to acknowledge to himself that it was so artfully concealed as to escape even his acuteness. We leave the reader himself to judge of the correctness of both opinions.

"This is a pretty bight of a basin, Guinea," observed the white, rolling his tobacco in his mouth, and turning his eyes, for the first time in many minutes, from the vessel; "and a spot is it that a man, who lay on a lee-shore without sticks, might be glad to see his craft in. Now do I call myself something of a seaman, and yet I cannot weather upon the philosophy of that fellow in keeping his ship in the outer harbor, when he might warp her into this millpond in half an hour. It gives his boats hard duty, dusky S'ip; and that I call making foul weather of fair!"

The negro had been christened Scipio Africanus, by a species of witticism which was much more common to the provinces than it is to the States of America, and which filled so many of the meaner employments of the country, in name at least, with the counterparts of the philosophers, heroes, poets and princes of Rome. To him it was a matter of small moment whether the vessel lay in the offing or in the port; and without discontinuing his childish amusement, he manifested the same, by replying, with great indifference—

"I s'pose he t'ink all the water inside lie on a top."

"I tell you, Guinea," returned the other, in a harsh, positive tone, "the fellow is a know-nothing! Would any man, who understands the behavior of a ship, keep his raft in a roadstead, when he might tie her, head and heels, in a basin like this?"

"What he call roadstead?" interrupted the negro, seizing at once, with the avidity of ignorance, on the little oversight of his adversary, in confounding the outer harbor of Newport with the wilder anchorage below, and with the usual indifference of all similar people to the more material matter of whether the objection was at all germane to the point at issue; "I never hear 'em call anchoring ground, with land around it, roadstead afore!"

"Hark ye, Mister Gold-coast," muttered the white, bending his head aside in a threatening manner, though he still disdained to turn his eyes on his humble adversary, "if you've no wish to wear your shins parceled for the next month, gather in the slack of your wit, and have an eye to the manner in which you let it run again. Just tell me this: isn't a port a port?—and isn't an offing an offing?"

As these were two propositions to which even the ingenuity of Scipio could raise no plausible objection, he wisely declined touching on either, contenting himself with shaking his head in self-complacency, and laughing as heartily at his imaginary triumph over his companion as if he had never known care, nor been the subject of wrong and humiliation, so long and so patiently endured.

"Aye, aye," grumbled the white, readjusting his person in its former composed attitude, and again crossing the arms, which had been a little separated, to give force to the menace against the tender member of the black, "now you are piping the wind out of your throat like a flock of long-shore crows, you think you've got the best of the matter. The Lord made a nigger an unrational animal; and an experienced seaman, who has doubled both Capes, and made all the headlands atween Fundy and Horn, has no right to waste his breath in teaching common-sense to any of the breed! I tell you, Scipio, since that is your name on the ship's books—though I'll wager a month's pay against a wooden boat-hook, that your father was known at home as Quashee, and your mother as Quasheeba—therefore do I tell you, Scipio Africa—which is a name for all your color, I believe—that yonder chap, in the outer harbor of this here seaport, is no judge of an anchorage, or he would drop a kedge, mayhap here-away, in a line with the southern end of that there small matter of an island, and hauling his ship up to it, fasten her to the spot with good hempen cables and iron mud-hooks. Now, look you here, S'ip, at the reason of the matter," he continued, in a manner which showed that the little skirmish that had just passed was like one of those sudden squalls of which they had both seen so many, and which were usually so soon succeeded by corresponding seasons of calm, "look at the rationality of what I say. He has come into this anchorage either for something or for nothing. I suppose you are ready to admit that. If for nothing, he might have found that much outside, and I'll say no more about it; but if for something, he could get it off easier, provided the ship lay here-away, just where I told you, boy, not a fathom ahead or astern than where she is now riding, though the article was no heavier than a fresh handful of feathers for the captain's pillow. Now, if you have anything to gainsay the reason of this, why, I'm ready to hear it as a reasonable man, and one who has not forgotten his manners in picking up his learning."

"S'pose a wind come out fresh here at nor-west," answered the other, stretching his brawny arm toward the point of the compass he named, "and a vessel want to get to sea in a hurry, how you t'ink he get her far enough up to lay through the weather reach? Ha! you answer me dat; you great scholar, Misser Dick, but you never see ship go in wind's teeth, or hear a monkey talk."

"The black is right!" exclaimed the youth, who, it would seem, had overheard the dispute, while he appeared otherwise engaged; "the slaver has left his vessel in the outer harbor, knowing that the wind holds so much to the westward at this season of the year; and then you see he keeps his light spars aloft, although it is plain enough, by the manner in which his sails are furled, that he is strong-handed. Can you make out, boys, whether he has an anchor under foot, or is he merely riding by a single cable?"

"The man must be a driveler, to lie in such a tide-way without dropping his stream, or at least a kedge, to steady the ship by," returned the white, without appearing to think anything more than the received practice of seamen necessary to decide the point. "That he is no great judge of an anchorage, I am ready to allow; but no man who can keep things so snug aloft would think of fastening his ship, for any length of time, by a single cable, to sheer starboard and port, like that kicking colt, tied to the tree by a long halter, that we fell in with in our passage overland from Boston."

"'Em got a stream down, and all he rest of he anchor stowed," said the black, whose dark eye was glancing understandingly at the vessel, while he still continued to cast his pebbles into the air. "S'pose

he jam he helm hard a-port, Misser Harry, and take a tide on he larboard bow, what you t'ink make him kick and gallup about! Golly! I like to see Dick, without a foot-rope, ride a colt tied to he tree!"

Again the negro enjoyed his humor, by shaking his head as if his whole soul was amused by the whimsical image his rude fancy had conjured, indulging in a hearty laugh till the tears came, and again his white companion muttered heavy and sententious denunciations. The young man, who seemed to enter very little into the quarrels and witticisms of his singular associates, still kept his gaze intently fastened on the vessel, which to him appeared, for the moment, to be the subject of some extraordinary interest. Shaking his own head, though in a far graver manner, as if his doubts were drawing to a close, he added, when the boisterous merriment of the negro had ceased:

"Scipio, you are right; he rides altogether by his stream, and he keeps everything in readiness for a sudden move. In ten minutes he could carry his ship beyond the fire of the battery, provided he had but a capful of wind."

"You appear to be a capital judge in these matters," said a voice behind him.

The youth turned suddenly on his heel, and then, for the first time, was he apprised of the presence of intruders. The surprise, however, was not confined to himself; for, as there was another new-comer to be added to the company, the gossiping tailor was quite as much, or even more, the subject of astonishment than any of that party which he had been so intently watching as to have prevented him from observing the approach of another utter stranger.

The new-comer was a man between thirty and forty, and of a mien and an attire not a little adapted to quicken the active curiosity of the goodman Homespun. His person was slight, but it afforded the promise of exceeding agility, and even of vigor, especially when contrasted with his stature, which was scarcely equal to the medium height of man. His skin had been dazzling as that of a woman, though a deep red, which had taken possession of the lower lineaments of his face, and which was particularly conspicuous on the outline of a fine aquiline nose, served to destroy all appearance of effeminacy. His hair was, like his complexion, fair, and fell about his temples, in rich, glossy, and exuberant curls. His mouth and chin were beautiful in their formation; but the former was a little scornful, and the two together bore a decided character of voluptuousness. The eye was blue, full, without being prominent, and, though in common placid and even soft, there were moments when it seemed a little unsettled and wild. He wore a high conical hat, placed a little on one side, so as to give a slightly rakish expression to his physiognomy, a riding-frock of light green, breeches of buckskin, high boots, and spurs. In one of his hands he carried a small whip, with which, when first seen, he was cutting the air with an appearance of the utmost indifference to the surprise occasioned by his sudden interruption.

"I say, sir, you seem to be an excellent judge in these matters," he repeated, when he had endured the frowning examination of the young seaman quite as long as comported with his own patience; "you speak like a man who at least feels that he has a right to give an opinion."

"Do you find it remarkable that one should not be ignorant of a profession that he has diligently pursued for a whole life?"

"Hum! I find it a little remarkable that one, whose business is that of a handicraft, should dignify his trade with such a sounding name as *profession*. We of the science of the law, and who enjoy the particular smiles of the learned universities, cannot say much more!"

"Then call it trade; for nothing in common with gentlemen of your craft is acceptable to a seaman," retorted the young mariner, turning away from the intruder with a disgust that he did not affect to conceal.

"A lad of some mettle!" muttered the other, with a rapid utterance and a meaning smile. "Let not such a trifle as a word part us, friend. I confess my igno-

rance of all maritime matters, and would gladly learn a little from one as skillful as yourself in the noble—*profession*. I think you said something concerning the manner in which yonder ship has anchored, and of the condition in which they keep things alow and aloft?"

"*Alow* and aloft!" exclaimed the young sailor, facing his interrogator with a stare that was quite as expressive as his recent disgust.

"Alow and aloft!" calmly repeated the other.

"I spoke of her neatness aloft, but do not affect to judge of things below at this distance."

"Then it was my error; but you will have pity on the ignorance of one who is so new to the *profession*. As I have intimated, I am no more than an unworthy barrister in the service of his Majesty, expressly sent from home on a particular errand. If it were not a pitiful pun, I might add, I am not yet a judge."

"No doubt you will soon arrive at that distinction," returned the other; "if his Majesty's ministers have any just conceptions of modest merit; unless, indeed, you should happen to be prematurely—"

The youth bit his lip, made a quick inclination of the head, and walked leisurely up the wharf, followed with the same appearance of deliberation by the two seamen who had accompanied him in his visit to the place.

The stranger in green watched the whole movement with a calm and apparently an amused eye, tapping his boot with his whip, and seeming to reflect like one who would willingly find means to continue the discourse.

"Hanged!" he at length uttered, as if to complete the sentence the other had left unfinished. "It is droll enough that such a fellow should dare to foretell so elevated a fate for *me!*"

He was evidently preparing to follow the retiring party, when he felt a hand laid a little unceremoniously on his arm, and his step was arrested.

"One word in your ear, sir," said the attentive tailor, making a significant sign that he had matters of importance to communicate: "a single word, sir, since you are in the particular service of his Majesty. Neighbor Pardon," he continued with a patronizing air, "the sun is getting low, and you will make it late home, I fear. The girl will give you the garment, and—God speed you! Say nothing of what you have heard and seen until you have had word from me to that effect; for it is seemly that two men, who have had so much experience in a war like this, should not lack in discretion. Fare ye well, lad!—pass the good word to the worthy farmer, your father, not forgetting a refreshing hint of friendship to the thrifty housewife, your mother. Fare ye well, honest man, fare ye well!"

Homespun, having thus disposed of his admiring companion, waited, with much elevation of mien, until the gaping pumpkin had left the wharf, before he again turned his look on the stranger in green. The latter had continued in his tracks, with an air of undisturbed composure, until he was once more addressed by the tailor, whose character and dimensions he seemed to have taken in at a single glance of his rapid eye.

"You say, sir, you are a servant of his Majesty?" demanded the latter, determined to solve all doubts as to the other's claim on his confidence before he committed himself by any precipitate disclosure.

"I may say more—his familiar confidant!"

"It is an honor to converse with such a man, that I feel in every bone of my body," returned the cripple, smoothing his scanty hairs and bowing nearly to the earth; "a high and royal honor do I feel this gracious privilege to be."

"Such as it is, my friend, I take upon myself, in his Majesty's name, to bid you welcome."

"Such munificent condescension would open my whole heart though treason, and all other unrighteousness, were locked up in it. I am happy, honored, and I doubt not, honorable sir, to have this opportunity of proving my zeal to the King, before one who will not fail to report my humble efforts to his royal ears."

"Speak freely," interrupted the stranger in green, with an air of princely condescension; though one less simple and less occupied with his own budding honors than the tailor, might have easily discovered that he began to grow weary of the other's prolix loyalty. "Speak without reserve, friend; it is what we always do at court." Then, switching his boot with his riding-whip, he muttered to himself as he swung his light frame on his heel, with an indolent, indifferent air, "If the fellow swallows that, he is as heavy as his own goose!"

"I shall, sir, I shall; and a great proof of charity is it in one like your noble self to listen. You see yonder tall ship, sir, in the outer harbor of this loyal seaport?"

"I do; she seems to be an object of general attention among the worthy lieges of the place."

"Therein, I conceive, sir, you have overrated the sagacity of my townsmen. She has been lying where you now see her for many days, and not a syllable have I heard whispered against her character, from mortal man, except myself."

"Indeed!" muttered the stranger, biting the handle of his whip, and fastening his glittering eyes intently on the features of the good man, which were literally swelling with the importance of his discovery; "and what may be the nature of *your* suspicions?"

"Why, sir, I may be wrong—and God forgive me if I am—but this is no more nor less than what has arisen in my mind on the subject. Yonder ship, and her crew, bear the reputation of being innocent and harmless slavers, among the good people of Newport; and as such are they received and welcomed in the place; the one to a safe and easy anchorage, and the others among the taverners and shopdealers. I would not have you imagine that a single garment has ever gone from my fingers for one of all the crew; no, let it be forever remembered that the whole of their dealings have been with the young tradesman named Tape, who entices customers to barter by back-biting and otherwise defiling the fair names of his betters in the business; not a garment has been made by my hands for even the smallest boy."

"You are lucky," returned the stranger in green, "in being so well quit of the knaves; and yet have you forgotten to name the particular offense with which I am to charge them before the face of the King?"

"I am coming as fast as possible to the weighty matter. You must know, worthy and commendable sir, that I am a man that has seen much and suffered much, in his Majesty's service. Five bloody and cruel wars have I gone through, besides other adventures and experiences, such as become a humble subject to suffer meekly and in silence."

"All of which shall be directly communicated to the royal ear. And now, worthy friend, relieve your mind by a frank communication of your suspicions."

"Thanks, honorable sir; your goodness in my behalf cannot be forgotten, though it shall never be said that impatience to seek the relief you mentioned hurried me into a light and improper manner of unburdening my mind. You must know, honored gentleman, that yesterday, as I sat alone, at this very hour, on my board, reflecting in my thoughts—for the plain reason that my envious neighbor had enticed all the newly-arrived customers to his own shop—well, sir, the head will be busy when the hands are idle; there I sat, as I have briefly told you, reflecting in my thoughts, like any other accountable being, on the calamities of life, and on the great experiences that I have had in the wars; for you must know, valiant gentleman, besides the affair in the land of the Medes and Persians, and the Porteous mob in Edinboro', five cruel and bloody——"

"There is that in your air which sufficiently proclaims the soldier," interrupted his listener, who struggled to keep down his rising impatience, "but as my time is so precious, I would now more especially hear what you have to say concerning yonder ship."

"Yes, sir, one gets a military look after seeing numberless wars; and so happily for the need of both, I have come to the part of my secret which touches

more particularly on the character of that vessel. There sat I, reflecting on the manner in which the strange seamen had been deluded by my tonguey neighbor—for, as you should know, sir, a desperate talker is that Tape, and a younker who has seen but one war at the utmost—therefore, was I thinking of the manner in which he had enticed my lawful customers from my shop, when, as one thought is the father of another, the following concluding reasoning, as our pious priest has it weekly in his reviving and searching discourses, came uppermost in my mind; if these mariners were honest and conscientious slavers, would they overlook a laboring man with a large family, to pour their well-earned gold into the lap of a common babbler? I proclaimed to myself at once, sir, that they would not. I was bold to say the same in my own mind; and, thereupon, I openly put the question to all in hearing, if they are not slavers, what are they? A question which the King himself would, in his royal wisdom, allow to be a question easier asked than answered; upon which I replied, if the vessel be no fair-trading slaver, nor a common cruiser of his Majesty, it is as tangible as the best man's reasoning that she may be neither more nor less than the ship of that nefarious pirate, the Red Rover."

"The *Red Rover!*" exclaimed the stranger in green, with a start so natural as to evidence that his dying interest in the tailor's narrative was suddenly and powerfully revived. "That, indeed, would be a secret worth having! but why do you suppose this?"

"For sundry reasons, which I am now about to name in their respective order. In the first place, she is an armed ship, sir. In the second, she is no lawful cruiser, or the same would be publicly known, and by no one sooner than myself, inasmuch as it is seldom that I do not finger a penny from the King's ships. In the third place, the burglarious and unfeeling conduct of the few seamen who have landed from her, go to prove it; and, lastly, what is well proved may be considered as substantially established. These are what, sir, I should call the opening premises of my inferences, all of which I hope you will properly lay before the royal mind of his Majesty."

The barrister in green listened to the somewhat wire-drawn deductions of Homespun with great attention, notwithstanding the confused and obscure manner in which they were delivered by the aspiring tradesman. His keen eye rolled quickly and often from the vessel to the countenance of his companion; but several moments elapsed before he saw fit to make any reply. The reckless gayety with which he had introduced himself, and which he had hitherto maintained in the discourse, was entirely superseded by a musing and abstracted air, which sufficiently proved that whatever levity he might betray in common, he was far from being a stranger on proper occasions to deep and becoming thought. Suddenly throwing off his air of gravity, however, he assumed one in which irony and sincerity were singularly blended, and laying his hand familiarly on the shoulder of the expecting tailor, he replied:

"You have communicated such a matter as becometh a faithful and loyal servant of the King. It is well known that a heavy price is set on the head of the meanest follower of the Rover; and that a rich, aye, a splendid reward will be the fortune of him who is the instrument of delivering the whole knot of miscreants into the hands of the executioner. Indeed, I know not but some marked evidence of the royal pleasure might follow such a service. There was Phipps, a man of humble origin, who received knighthood——"

"Knighthood!" echoed the tailor, in awful admiration.

"Knighthood," coolly repeated the stranger, "honorable and chivalric knighthood. What may have been the appellation you received from your sponsors in baptism?"

"My given name, gracious and grateful sir, is Hector."

"And the house itself?—the distinctive appellation of the family?"

"We have *always* been called Homespun."

"Sir Hector Homespun will sound as

well as another! But to secure these rewards, my friend, it is necessary to be discreet. I admire your ingenuity, and I am a perfect convert to your logic. You have so entirely demonstrated the truth of your own suspicions, that I have no more doubt of yonder vessel being the pirate, than I have of your wearing spurs, and being called Sir Hector. The two things are equally established in my mind; but we must proceed in the matter with caution. I understand you to say that no one else has been enlightened by your erudition in this affair?"

"Not a soul. Tape would swear that the crew were conscientious slavers."

"So best. We must first render conclusions certain; then to our reward. Meet me at the hour of eleven this night, at yonder low point, where the land juts into the outer harbor. From that stand will we make our observations; and having removed every doubt, let the morning produce a discovery that shall ring from the Colony of the Bay to the settlement of Oglethorpe; and until then we part, for it is not wise that we be longer seen in conference. Remember silence, punctuality, and the favor of the King. These are our watchwords."

"Adieu, honorable gentleman," said his companion, making a reverence nearly to the earth, as the other slightly touched his hat in passing.

"Adieu, Sir Hector," returned the stranger in green, with an affable smile, and a gracious wave of the hand. He then walked slowly up the wharf, and disappeared behind the mansion of the Homespuns, leaving the head of that ancient family, like many a predecessor and many a successor, so rapt in the admiration of his own good fortune, and so blinded by his folly, that, while physically he saw to the right and to the left as well as ever, his mental vision was completely obscured in the clouds of ambition.

CHAPTER III.

Alonzo.—"Good boatswain have care."—TEMPEST.

THE instant the stranger had separated from the credulous tailor, he lost his assumed air in one more natural and sedate. Still it would seem that thought was an unwonted and unwelcome tenant of his mind, for, switching his boot with his little riding-whip, he entered the principal street of the place with a light step and a wandering eye. Though his look was unsettled, few of the individuals whom he passed escaped his quick glances; and it was quite apparent, from the hurried manner in which he began to regard objects, that his mind was not less active than his body. A stranger thus accounted, and one bearing about his person so many evidences of his recent acquaintance with the road, did not fail to attract the attention of the provident publicans we have had occasion to mention in our opening chapter. Declining the civilities of the most favored of the inn-keepers, he suffered his steps to be oddly enough arrested by the one whose house was the usual haunt of the hangers-on of the port.

On entering the bar-room of this tavern, as it was called, but which in another country would probably have aspired to be termed no more than a pot-house, he found the hospitable apartment thronged with its customary revelers. A slight interruption was produced by the appearance of a guest who was altogether superior in mien and attire to the ordinary customers of the house, but it ceased the moment the stranger had thrown himself on a bench and intimated to the host the nature of his wants. As the latter furnished the required draught he made a sort of apology, which was intended for the ears of all his customers nigh the stranger, for the manner in which an individual, in the farther end of the long narrow room, not only monopolized the discourse, but appeared to extort the attention of all within hearing to some portentous legend he was recounting.

"It is the boatswain of the slaver in the outer harbor, squire," the worthy minister

of Bacchus concluded; "a man who has followed the water many a day, and who has seen sights and prodigies enough to fill a smart volume. Old Bor'us the people call him, though his lawful name is Jack Nightingale. Is the toddy to the squire's relish?"

The stranger assented to the latter query by smacking his lips and bowing, as he put down the nearly untouched draught. He then turned his head to examine the individual who might, by the manner in which he declaimed, have been termed, in the language of the country, another "orator of the day."

A stature which greatly exceeded six feet, enormous whiskers, that quite concealed the moiety of his grim countenance; a scar, which was the memorial of a badly-healed gash, that had once threatened to divide that moiety in quarters; limbs in proportion; the whole rendered striking by the dress of a seaman; a long, tarnished silver chain, and a little whistle of the same metal, served to render the individual in question sufficiently remarkable. Without appearing to be in the smallest degree aware of the entrance of one altogether so superior to the class of his usual auditors, this son of the ocean continued his narrative as follows, and in a voice that seemed given to him by Nature in very mockery of his musical name; indeed, so very near did his tones approach to the low murmurings of a bull, that some little practice was necessary to accustom the ear to the strangely uttered words.

"Well," he continued, thrusting his brawny arm forth, with the fist clenched, indicating the necessary point of the compass by the thumb: "the coast of Guinea might have lain hereaway, and the wind, you see, was dead off shore, blowing in squalls, as a cat spits, all the same as if the old fellow who keeps it bagged for the use of us seamen sometimes let the stopper slip through his fingers, and was sometimes fetching it up again with a double turn round the end of his sack. You know what a sack is, brother?"

This abrupt question was put to the gaping bumpkin already known to the reader, who with the nether garment just received from the tailor under his arm, had lingered to add the incidents of the present to the stock of lore that he had already obtained for the ears of his kinsfolk in the country. A general laugh, at the expense of the admiring Pardon, succeeded. Nightingale bestowed a knowing wink on one or two of his familiars, and profiting by the occasion "to freshen his nip" as he quaintly styled swallowing a pint of rum and water, he continued his narrative, by saying in a sort of admonitory tone:

"And the time may come when you may know what a round-turn is, too, if you let go your hold of honesty. A man's neck was made, brother, to keep his head above water, and not to be stretched out of shape like a pair of badly-fitted dead-eyes. Therefore, have your reckoning worked up in season, and the lead of conscience going, when you find yourself drifting on the shoals of temptation." Then rolling his tobacco in his mouth, he looked boldly about him, like one who had acquitted himself of a moral obligation, and continued: "Well, there lay the land, and, as I was saying, the wind was here, at east-and-by-south-half-south, sometimes blowing like a fin-back in a flurry, and sometimes leaving all the canvas, chafing ag'in the rigging and spars, as if a bolt of duck cost no more than a rich man's blessing. I didn't like the looks of the weather, seeing that there was altogether too much unsartainty for a quiet watch, so I walked aft, in order to put myself in the way of giving an opinion, if-so-be such a thing should be asked.

"You must know, brothers, that, according to my notions of religion and behavior, a man is not good for much unless he has a full share of manners; therefore I am never known to put my spoon in the Captain's mess unless I am invited, for the plain reason that my berth is for'ard and his'n aft. I do not say in which end of a ship the better man is to be found; that is a matter concerning which there are different opinions, though most good judges in the business are agreed. But aft I walked, to put myself in the way of giving an opinion, if one should be asked; nor was it long before the thing came to

pass just as I had foreseen. 'Mister Nightingale,' says he—for our Captain is a gentleman, and never forgets his behavior on deck, or when any of the ship's company are at hand—'*Mister* Nightingale,' says he, 'what do you think of that rag of a cloud, here-away at the northwest?' says he. 'Why, sir,' says I, boldly, for I am never backward in speaking when properly spoken to—so, 'why, sir,' says I, 'saving your honor's better judgment'—which was all a flam, for he was but a chicken to me in years and experience; but then I never throw hot ashes to windward, or anything else that is warm—so, 'sir,' says I, 'it is my advice to hand the three topsails and to stow the jib. We are in no hurry; for the plain reason, that Guinea will be to-morrow just where Guinea is to-night. As for keeping the ship steady in these matters of squalls, we have the mainsail on her——'"

"You should have furled your mainsail, too," exclaimed a voice from behind, that was quite as dogmatical, though a little less grum than that of the loquacious boatswain.

"What know-nothing says that?" demanded Nightingale, fiercely, all his latent ire being excited by so rude and daring an interruption.

"A man who has run Africa down, from Bon to Good Hope, more than once, and who knows a white squall from a rainbow," returned Dick Fid, edging his short person stoutly toward his furious adversary, and making his way through the crowd by which the important boatswain was environed, by dint of his massive shoulders. "Aye, brother, and a man, know-much or know-nothing, who would never advise his officer to keep so much after-sail on a ship, when there was the likelihood of the wind taking her aback."

To this bold vindication of an opinion which all present deemed to be so audacious, there succeeded a general and loud murmur. Encouraged by this evidence of his popularity, Nightingale was not slow nor very meek with his retort; and then followed a clamorous concert, in which the voices of the company in general served for the higher and shriller notes, and through which the bold and vigorous assertions, contradictions and opinions of the two principal disputants were heard running in a sort of thorough-bass.

For some time no part of the discussion was very distinct, so great was the confusion of tongues; and there were certain symptoms of an intention, on the part of Fid and the boatswain, to settle their controversy by the last appeal. During this moment of suspense, the former squared his firm-built frame in front of his gigantic opponent, and there were very vehement passings and counter-passings in the way of gestures from four athletic arms, each of which was knobbed, like a fashionable rattan, with a lump of bones, knuckles and sinews, that threatened annihilation to anything that should oppose it. As the general clamor, however, gradually abated, the chief reasoners began to be heard; and as if content to rely on their respective powers of eloquence, each gradually relinquished his hostile attitude, and appeared disposed to maintain his ground by a member scarcely less terrible than his brawny arm.

"You are a bold seaman, brother," said Nightingale, resuming his seat, "and if saying was doing, no doubt you would make a ship talk. But I, who have seen fleets of two and three deckers—and that of all nations, except your Mohawks, mayhap, whose cruisers I will confess never to have fallen in with—lying as snug as so many white gulls, under reefed mainsails, know how to take the strain off a ship, and to keep my bulkheads in their places."

"I deny the judgment of heaving-to a boat under her after square-sails," retorted Dick. "Give her the stay-sails, if you will, and no harm done; but a true seaman will never get a bagful of wind between his mainmast and his lee-swifter, if-so-be he knows his business. But words are like thunder, which only rumbles aloft without ever striking, as I have yet seen; let us therefore put the question to some one who has been on the water, and who knows a little of life and of ships as well as ourselves."

"If the oldest admiral in his Majesty's fleet was here, he wouldn't be backward in saying who is right and who is wrong. I say, brothers, if there is a man among you all who has had the advantage of a sea education, let him speak, in order that the truth of this matter may not be hid like a marlinspike jammed between a brace-block and a yard."

"Here, then, is the man," returned Fid; and, stretching out his arm, he seized Scipio by the collar, and drew him without ceremony into the center of the circle that had opened around the two disputants. "There is a man for you, who has made one more voyage between this and Africa than myself, for the reason that he was born there. Now, answer as if you were hallooing from a lee-earing, S'ip, under what sail would you heave-to a ship on the coast of your native country, with the danger of a white squall at hand?"

"I no heave 'em to," said the black, "I make 'em scud."

"Aye, boy; but to be in readiness for the puff, would you jam her up under the mainsail, or let her lie a little off under a fore course?"

"Any fool know dat," returned Scipio, grumly, and evidently tired already of being thus catechised. "If you want 'em fall off, how you'm expect, in reason, he do it under a main course? You answer me that, Misser Dick."

"Gentlemen," said Nightingale, looking about him with an air of offended dignity, "I put it to your honors, is it genteel behavior to bring a nigger, in this out-of-the-way fashion, to give an opinion in the teeth of a white man?"

This appeal to the prejudices of the company was answered by a common murmur. Scipio, who was prepared to maintain, and would have maintained, his professional opinion, after his positive and peculiar manner, against any disputant, had not the heart to resist so general an evidence of the impropriety of his presence. Without uttering a word in vindication or apology, he folded his arms and walked out of the house, with the submission and meekness of one who had been too long trained in humility to rebel. This desertion on the part of his companion was not, however, so quickly acquiesced in by Fid, who found himself thus unexpectedly deprived of the testimony of the black. He loudly remonstrated against his retreat; but finding it in vain, he crammed the end of several inches of tobacco into his mouth, swearing, as he followed the African, and keeping his eye at the same time firmly fastened on his adversary, that, in his opinion, "the lad, if he was fairly skinned, would be found to be the whiter man of the two."

The triumph of the boatswain was now complete; nor was he at all sparing of his exultation.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing himself with confidence to the motley audience who surrounded him, "you see that reason is like a ship bearing down with studding-sails on both sides, leaving a straight wake and no favors. Now, I scorn boasting, nor do I know who the fellow is that just sheered off in time to save his character; but this I will say, that the man is not to be found, between Boston and the West Indies, who knows better than myself how to make a ship walk, or how to make her stand still, provided I——"

The deep voice of Nightingale became suddenly hushed, and his eye was riveted by a sort of enchantment on the keen glance of the stranger in green, whose countenance was now seen blended among the more vulgar faces of the crowd.

"Mayhap," continued the boatswain, swallowing his words, in the surprise of seeing himself unexpectedly confronted by so imposing an eye, "mayhap this gentleman has some knowledge of the sea, and can decide the matter in dispute."

"We do not study naval tactics at the universities," returned the other, briskly; "though I will confess, from the little I have heard, I am altogether in favor of *scudding*."

He pronounced the latter word with an emphasis which rendered it questionable if he did not mean to pun; the more especially as he threw down his reckoning, and instantly left the field to the quiet possession of Nightingale. The latter,

after a short pause, resumed his narrative, though, either from weariness or some other cause, it was observed that his voice was far less positive than before and that his tale was cut prematurely short.

After completing his narrative and his grog, he staggered to the beach, whither a boat was shortly after dispatched to convey him on board the ship, which, during all this time, had not ceased to be the constant subject of the suspicious examination of the goodman Homespun.

In the meanwhile, the stranger in green had pursued his walk along the main street of the town. Fid had given chase to the disconcerted Scipio, grumbling as he went, and uttering no very delicate remarks on the knowledge and seamanship of the boatswain. They soon joined company again, the former changing his attack to the negro, whom he liberally abused for abandoning a point which he maintained was as simple and as true as "that yonder bit of a schooner would make more way, going wing-and-wing, than jammed up on a wind."

Probably diverted with the touches of peculiar character he had detected in this singular pair of confederates, or possibly led by his own wayward humor, the stranger followed their footsteps. After turning from the water, they mounted a hill, the latter a little in the rear of his pilots, until he lost sight of them in a bend of the street, or rather road; for, by this time, they were past even the little suburbs of the town. Quickening his steps, the barrister, as he had announced himself to be, was glad to catch a glimpse of the two worthies seated under a fence, several minutes after he had believed them lost. They were making a frugal meal from the contents of a little bag, which the white had borne under his arm, portions from which he now dispensed liberally to his companion, who had taken his post sufficiently nigh to proclaim that perfect amity was restored, though still a little in the background, in deference to the superior condition which the other enjoyed in favor of his color. Approaching the spot, the stranger observed

"If you make so free with the bag, my lads, your third man may have to go supperless to bed."

"Who hails?" said Dick, looking up from his bone, with an expression much like that of a mastiff when engaged at a similar employment.

"I merely wished to remind you that you had another messmate," cavalierly returned the other.

"Will you take a cut, brother?" said the seaman, offering the bag, with the liberality of a sailor, the moment he fancied there was an indirect demand made on its contents.

"You still mistake my meaning; on the wharf you had another companion."

"Aye, aye; he is in the offing there, overhauling that bit of a light-house, which is badly enough moored, unless they mean it to show the channel to your ox teams and inland traders; here-away, gentleman, where you see that pile of stones, which seems likely to be coming down shortly by the run."

The stranger looked in the direction indicated by the other, and saw the young marine to whom he had alluded, standing at the foot of the ruined tower, which was crumbling under the slow operations of time, at no great distance from the place where he stood. Throwing a handful of small change to the seamen, he wished them a better meal, and crossed the fence, with an apparent intention of examining the ruin also.

"The lad is free with his coppers," said Dick, suspending the movements of his teeth, to give the stranger another and a better look; "but, as they will not grow where he has planted them, S'p, you may turn them over to my pocket. An off-handed and a free-handed chap that, Africa; but then these law-dealers get all their pence from the devil, and they are sure of more when the shot begins to run low in the locker."

Leaving the negro to collect the money and to transfer it, as in duty bound, to the hands of him who, if not his master, was at all times ready and willing to exercise the authority of one, we shall follow the stranger in his walk toward the totter-

ing edifice. There was little about the ruin itself to attract the attention of one who, from his assertions, had probably often enjoyed the opportunities of examining far more imposing remains of former ages, on the other side of the Atlantic.

It was a small circular tower, which stood on rude pillars, connected by arches, and might have been constructed in the infancy of the country, as a place of defense, though it is far more probable that it was a work of a less warlike nature. More than half a century after the period of which we are writing, this little edifice, peculiar in its form, its ruinous condition, and its materials, has suddenly become the study and the theme of that very learned sort of individual, the American antiquarian. While the chivalrous in the arts and in the antiquities of the country have been gallantly breaking their lances around the moldering walls, the less instructed and the less zealous have regarded the combatants with the same species of wonder as they would have manifested had they been present when the renowned knight of La Mancha tilted against those other windmills, so ingeniously described by the immortal Cervantes.

On reaching the place, the stranger in green gave his boot a smart blow with the riding-whip, as if to attract the attention of the abstracted young sailor, freely commencing a conversation at the same time, like one who was a regular companion, rather than an intruder on the other's time.

"A very pretty object this would be, if covered with ivy, to be seen peeping through an opening in a wood," he said. "But I beg pardon; gentlemen of your *profession* have little to do with woods and crumbling stones. Yonder is the tower"—pointing to the masts of the ship in the outer harbor—"you love to look on; and your only ruin is a wreck!"

"You seem familiar with our tastes, sir," coldly returned the seaman.

"It is by instinct, then; for it is certain I have had but little opportunity of acquiring my knowledge by actual communion with any of the—cloth; nor do I perceive that I am likely to be more fortunate at present. Let us be frank, my friend, and talk in amity. What do you see about this pile of stones that can keep you so long from your study of yonder noble and gallant ship?"

"Did it, then, surprise you that a seaman out of employment should examine a vessel that he finds to his mind, perhaps, with an intention to ask for service?"

"Her commander must be a dull fellow, if he refuse it to so proper a lad! But you seem to be far too well instructed for any of the meaner berths."

"Berths!" repeated the other, again fastening his eyes, with a singular expression, on the stranger in green.

"Berths! It is your nautical word for 'situation' or 'station,' is it not? We know but little of the marine vocabulary, we barristers; but I think I may venture on that as the true Doric. Am I justified by your authority?"

"The word, certainly, is not yet obsolete; and, by a figure, I may venture to say, it is as certainly correct in the sense you used it."

"Obsolete!" repeated the stranger in green, returning the meaning look he had just received. "Is that the name of any part of a ship? Perhaps, by *figure*, you mean figure-head; and, by *obsolete*, the long-boat?"

The young man laughed; and, as if this sally had broken through the barrier of his reserve, his manner lost some of its restraint during the remainder of their conference.

"It is just as plain," he said, "that you have been at sea, as it is that I have been at school. Since we have both been so fortunate, we may afford to be generous and cease speaking in parables. For instance, what do you think has been the object and use of this ruin, when it was in better condition than it is at present?"

"In order to judge of that," returned the stranger in green, "it may be necessary to examine it more closely. Let us ascend."

As he spoke, the barrister mounted, by a crazy ladder, to the floor which lay just above the crown of the arches, through which he passed by an open trap-door.

His companion hesitated to follow; but, observing that the other expected him at the summit of the ladder, and that he very kindly pointed out a defective round, he sprang forward, and went up the ascent with an agility and steadiness peculiar to his calling.

"Here we are," exclaimed the stranger in green, looking about at the naked walls, which were formed of such small and irregular stones as to give the building the appearance of dangerous frailty, "with good oaken plank for our deck as you would say, and the sky for our roof, as we call the upper part of a house at the universities. Now let us speak of things on the lower world. A—a—; I forget what you said was your usual appellation."

"That might depend on circumstances. I have been known by different names in different situations. However, if you call me Wilder, I shall not fail to answer."

"Wilder! a good name: though I dare say, it would have been as true were it Wild-one. You young ship-boys have the character of being a little erratic in your humors. How many tender hearts have you left to sigh for your errors, amid shady bowers, while you have been plowing—that is the word, I believe—plowing the salt-sea ocean?"

"Few sigh for me," returned Wilder, thoughtfully, who began to chafe under this free sort of catechism. "Let us return to our study of the tower. What think you has been its object?"

"Its present use is plain, and its former use can be no great mystery. It holds at this moment two great hearts; and, if I am not mistaken, as many light heads, not overstocked with the stores of wisdom. Formerly it had its granaries of corn, at least, and, I doubt not, certain little quadrupeds, who were quite as light of fingers as we are of head and heart. In plain English, it has been a mill."

"There are those who think it has been a fortress."

"Hum! The place might do, at need," returned he in green, casting a rapid and peculiar glance around him. "But mill it has been, notwithstanding one might wish it a nobler origin. The windy situation, the pillars to keep off the invading vermin, the shape, the air, the very complexion, prove it. Whir-r-r, whir-r-r; there has been clatter enough here in time past, I warrant you. Hist! It is not done yet!"

Stepping lightly to one of the little perforations which had once served as windows to the tower, he cautiously thrust his head through the opening; and, after gazing there half a minute, he withdrew it again, making a gesture to the attentive Wilder to be silent. The latter complied; nor was it long before the nature of the interruption was sufficiently explained.

The silvery voice of woman was first heard at a little distance; and then, as the speakers drew nigher, the sounds arose directly from beneath, within the very shadow of the tower. By a sort of tacit consent, Wilder and the barrister chose spots favorable to the execution of such a purpose, and each continued during the time the visitors remained near the ruin, examining their persons, unseen themselves, and—we are sorry we must do so much violence to the breeding of two such important characters in our legend—amused and attentive listeners to their conversation.

CHAPTER IV.

"They fool me to the top of my bent.—HAMLET."

THE party below consisted of four individuals, all of whom were females. One was a lady in the decline of her years; another was past the middle age; the third was on the very threshold of what is called "life," as it is applied to intercourse with the world; and the fourth was a negress, who might have seen some five-and-twenty revolutions of the seasons. The latter, at that time and in that country, of course appeared only in the character of an humble, though perhaps favored domestic.

"And now, my child, that I have given you all the advice which circumstances and your own excellent heart need," said the elderly lady, among the first words

that were distinctly intelligible to the listeners, "I will change the ungracious office to one more agreeable. You will tell your father of my continued affection, and of the promise he has given, that you are to return once again, before we separate for the last time."

This speech was delivered to the younger female, and was apparently received with as much tenderness and sincerity as it was uttered. The one who was addressed raised her eyes, which were glittering with tears she evidently struggled to conceal, and answered in a voice that sounded in the ears of the two youthful listeners like the notes of the siren, so very sweet and musical were its tones.

"It is useless to remind me of a promise, my beloved aunt, which I have so much interest in remembering," she said. "I hope for even more than you have perhaps dared to wish; if my father does not return with me in the spring, it shall not be for want of urging on my part."

"Our good Wyllys will lend her aid," returned the aunt, smiling and bowing to the third female, with that mixture of suavity and form which was peculiar to the stately manners of the time, and which was rarely neglected when a superior addressed an inferior. "She is entitled to command some interest with General Grayson, from her fidelity and services."

"She is entitled to everything that love and heart can give!" exclaimed the niece, with a haste and an earnestness that proclaimed how willingly she would temper the formal politeness of the other by the warmth of her own affectionate manner; "my father will scarcely refuse *her* anything."

"And have we the assurance of Mrs. Wyllys that she will be in our interests?" demanded the aunt, without permitting her own sense of propriety to be overcome by the stronger feelings of her niece; "with so powerful an ally, our league will be invincible."

"I am so entirely of opinion that the salubrious air of this healthful island is of great importance to my young charge, madam, that, were all other considerations wanting, the little I can do to aid your wishes shall be sure to be done."

Wyllys spoke with dignity, and perhaps with some portion of that reserve which distinguished all the communications between the wealthy and high-born aunt and the salaried and dependent governess of her brother's heiress. Still her manner was gentle, and the voice, like that of the pupil, soft and feminine.

"We may then consider the victory as achieved, as my late husband the Rear-admiral was accustomed to say. Admiral De Lacey, my dear Mrs. Wyllys, adopted it in early life as a maxim, by which all his future conduct was governed, and by adhering to which he acquired no small share of his professional reputation, that, in order to be successful, it was only necessary to be determined one would be so; a noble and inspiriting rule, and one that could not fail to lead to those signal results which, as we all know them, I need not mention."

Wyllys bowed her head, in acknowledgment of the truth of the opinion, and in testimony of the renown of the deceased Admiral; but did not think it necessary to make any reply. Instead of allowing the subject to occupy her mind any longer, she turned to her young pupil, and observed, speaking in a voice and with a manner from which every appearance of restraint was banished—

"Gertrude, my love, you will have pleasure in returning to this charming island, and to these cheering sea-breezes."

"And to my aunt!" exclaimed Gertrude. "I wish my father could be persuaded to dispose of his estates in Carolina and come northward to reside the whole year."

"It is not quite as easy for an affluent proprietor to remove as you may imagine, my child," returned Mrs. De Lacey. "Much as I wish that some such plan could be adopted, I never press my brother on the subject. Besides, I am not certain, that if we were ever to make another change in the family, it would not be to return *home* altogether. It is now more than a century, Mrs. Wyllys, since the Graysons came into the colonies, in a

moment of dissatisfaction with the government in England. My great-grandfather, Sir Everard, was displeased with his second son, and the dissension led my grandfather to the province of Carolina. But, as the breach has long since been healed, I often think my brother and myself may yet return to the halls of our ancestors. Much will, however, depend on the manner in which we dispose of our treasure on this side of the Atlantic."

As the really well-meaning, though, perhaps, a little too much self-satisfied lady concluded her remark, she glanced her eye at the perfectly unconscious subject of the close of her speech. Gertrude had, as usual, when her aunt chose to favor her governess with any of the family reminiscences, turned her head aside, and was now offering her cheek, burning with health, and perhaps a little with shame, to the cooling influence of the evening breeze. The instant the voice of Mrs. De Lacey ceased, she turned hastily to her companions, and pointing to a noble-looking ship, whose masts, as it lay in the inner harbor, were seen rising above the roofs of the town, she exclaimed, glad to change the subject in any manner—"And yonder gloomy prison is to be our home, dear Mrs. Wyllys, for the next month!"

"I hope your dislike to the sea has magnified the time," mildly returned the governess; "the passage between this place and Carolina has often been made in a much shorter period."

"That it has been so done I can testify," resumed the Admiral's widow, adhering a little pertinaciously to a train of thoughts which, once thoroughly awakened in her bosom, was not easily diverted into another channel, "since my late estimable and (I feel certain all who hear me will acquiesce when I add) gallant husband once conducted a squadron of his royal master from one extremity of his Majesty's American dominions to the other in a time less than that named by my niece. It may have made some difference in his speed that he was in pursuit of the enemies of his king and country; but still the fact proves that the voyage can be made within the month."

"There is that dreadful Henlopen, with its sandy shoals and shipwrecks on one hand, and that stream they call the Gulf on the other!" exclaimed Gertrude, with a shudder and a burst of natural terror, which makes timidity sometimes attractive, when exhibited in the person of youth and beauty. "If it were not for Henlopen and its gales, and its shoals, and its gulfs, I could think only of the pleasure of meeting my father."

Mrs. Wyllys, who never encouraged her pupil in these natural weaknesses, however pretty and becoming they might appear to other eyes, turned with a steady mien to the young lady, and remarked, with a brevity and decision that were intended to put the question of fear at rest forever—

"If all the dangers you appear to apprehend existed in reality, the passage would not be made daily, or even hourly in safety. You have often, madam, come from the Carolinas by the sea, in company with Admiral De Lacey?"

"Never," the widow promptly and a little dryly answered. "The water never agreed with my constitution, and I have always made the journey by land. But then, you know, Wyllys, as the consort and relict of a flag officer, it was not seemly that I should be ignorant of naval science. I believe there are few ladies in the British empire who are more familiar with ships, either singly or in squadron, particularly the latter, than myself. This information I have naturally acquired, as the companion of an officer whose fortune it was to lead fleets. I presume these are matters of which you are profoundly ignorant."

The calm, dignified countenance of Wyllys, on which it would seem long cherished and painful recollections had left a settled but mild expression of sorrow, that rather tempered than destroyed the traces of character which were still remarkable in her eye, became clouded for a moment with a shade of melancholy. After hesitating, as if willing to change the subject, she replied:

"I have not been altogether a stranger to the sea. It has been my lot to have

made many long and some perilous voyages."

"As a mere passenger. But we wives of sailors, only, among our sex, can lay claim to any knowledge of the noble profession! What natural object is there, or can there be," exclaimed the nautical dowager, in a burst of professional enthusiasm, "finer than a stately ship breasting the billows, as I have heard the Admiral say a thousand times, its taffrail plowing the main, and its cutwater gliding after, like a sinuous serpent pursuing its shining wake, as a living creature choosing its path on the land, and leaving the bone under its fore-foot, a beacon for those that follow! I know not, my dear Wyllys, if I make myself intelligible to you, but to my instructed eye, this charming description conveys a picture of all that is grand and beautiful!"

The latent smile of the governess might have betrayed that she was imagining that the deceased Admiral had not been altogether devoid of the waggery of his vocation, had not a slight noise, which sounded like the rustling of the wind, but which in truth was suppressed laughter, proceeded from the upper room of the tower. The words, "It is lovely!" were still on the lips of the youthful Gertrude, who saw all the beauty of the picture her aunt had essayed to describe, without descending to the humble employment of verbal criticism. But her voice became hushed, and her attitude that of startled attention.

"Did you hear nothing?" she said.

"The rats have not yet altogether deserted the mill," was the calm reply of Wyllys.

"Mill! my dear Mrs. Wyllys; will you presist in calling this picturesque ruin a *mill?*"

"However fatal it may be to its charms, in the eyes of eighteen. I must call it a *mill.*"

"Ruins are not so plenty in this country, my dear governess," returned her pupil, laughing, while the ardor of her eye denoted how serious she was in defending her favorite opinion, "as to justify us in robbing them of any little claims to interest they may happen to possess."

"Then, happier is the country! Ruins in a land are, like most of the signs of decay in the human form, sad evidences of abuses and passions which have hastened the inroads of time. These provinces are like yourself, my Gertrude, in their freshness and their youth, and comparatively, in their innocence also. Let us hope for both a long, a useful, and a happy existence."

"Thank you for myself and my country; but still I can never admit that this picturesque ruin has been *a mill.*"

"Whatever it may have been, it has long occupied its present place, and has the appearance of continuing where it is much longer, which is more than can be said of our prison, as you call yonder stately ship, in which we are so soon to embark. Unless my eyes deceive me, madam, those masts are slowly moving past the chimneys of the town."

"You are very right, Wyllys. The seamen are towing the vessel into the outer harbor, where they will warp her fast to the anchors, and thus secure her until they are ready to unmake their sails, in order to put to sea in the morning. This is a maneuver often performed, and one which the Admiral has so clearly explained, that I should find little difficulty in superintending it in my own person, were it suitable to my sex."

"This is, then, a hint that all our own preparations are not completed. However lovely this spot may seem, Gertrude, we must now leave it, for some months at least."

"Yes," continued Mrs. De Lacey, slowly following the footsteps of the governess, who had already moved from beneath the ruin, "whole fleets have often been towed to their anchors, and there warped, waiting for wind and tide to serve. None of our sex know the dangers of the ocean, but we who have been bound in the closest of all ties to officers of rank and great service; and none others can ever truly enjoy the real grandeur of the ennobling profession. A charming object is a vessel cutting the waves with her taffrail, and chasing her wake on the trackless waters like a courser that ever keeps in his path,

though dashing madly on at the very top of his speed!"

The reply of Mrs. Wyllys was not audible to the covert listeners. Gertrude had followed her companions; but, when at some distance from the tower, she paused to take a parting look at its moldering walls. A profound stillness succeeded for more than a minute.

"There is something in that pile of stones, Cassandra," she said to the jet-black maiden at her elbow, "that could make me wish it had been something more than a mill."

"There rat in 'em," returned the literal and simple-minded black; "you hear what Misse Wyllys say?"

Gertrude turned, laughed, and patted the dark cheek of her attendant, with fingers that looked like snow by the contrast, as if to chide her for wishing to destroy the pleasing illusion she would so gladly harbor, and then bounded down the hill after her aunt and governess, like a joyous and youthful Atalanta.

The two singularly consorted listeners in the tower stood gazing at their respective look-outs, so long as the smallest glimpse of the flowing robe of her light form was to be seen; and then they turned to each other and stood confronted, the eyes of each endeavoring to read the expression of his neighbor's countenance.

"I am ready to make an affidavit before my Lord High Chancellor," suddenly exclaimed the barrister, "that this has never been a mill!"

"Your opinion has undergone a sudden change!"

"I am open to conviction, as I hope to be a judge. The case has been argued by a powerful advocate, and I have lived tc see my error."

"And yet there are rats in the place."

"Land rats, or water rats?" quickly demanded the other, giving his companion one of those startling and searching glances, which his keen eye had so freely at command.

"Both, I believe," was the caustic reply; "certainly the former, or the gentlemen of the long robe are much injured by the report."

The barrister laughed; nor did his temper appear in the slightest degree ruffled at so free a hit at his learned and honorable profession.

"You gentlemen of the ocean have such an honest and amusing frankness about you," he said, "that I vow to God you are overwhelming. I am a downright admirer of your noble calling, and something skilled in its terms. What spectacle, for instance, can be finer than a noble ship 'stemming the waves with her taff-rail,' and chasing her wake, like a racer on the course?"

"Leaving the 'bone in her mouth,' under her stern, as a lighthouse for all that come after!"

Then, as if they found singular satisfaction in dwelling on these images of the worthy relic of the Admiral, they broke out simultaneously into a fit of clamorous merriment, which caused the old ruin to ring, as in its best days of windy power. The barrister was the first to regain his self-command, for the mirth of the young mariner was joyous, and without the least restraint.

"But this is dangerous ground for any but a seaman's widow to touch," the former observed, as suddenly causing his laughter to cease as he had admitted of its indulgence. "The younger, she who is no lover of a mill, is a rare and lovely creature! it would seem that she is the niece of the nautical critic."

The young mariner ceased laughing in his turn, as if he were suddenly convinced of the glaring impropriety of making so near a relative of the fair vision he had seen, the subject of his merriment. Whatever might have been his secret thoughts, he was content with replying—

"She so declared herself."

"Tell me," said the barrister, walking close to the other, like one who communicated an important secret in the question, "was there not something remarkable, searching, extraordinary, heart-touching, in the voice of her they called Wyllys?"

"Did you note it?"

"It sounded to me like the tones of an oracle—the whisperings of fancy—the

very words of truth! It was a strange and persuasive voice!"

"I confess I felt its influence, and in a way for which I cannot account!"

"It amounts to infatuation!" returned the barrister, pacing up and down the little apartment, every trace of humor and irony having disappeared in a look of settled and abstracted care. His companion appeared little disposed to interrupt his meditations, but stood leaning against the naked walls, himself the subject of reflection. At length the former shook off his air of thought, with that startling quickness which seemed common to his manner; he approached a window, and directing the attention of Wilder to the ship in the outer harbor, abruptly demanded—

"Has all your interest in yonder vessel ceased?"

"Far from it; it is just such a boat as a seaman's eye loves to study!"

"Will you venture to board her?"

"At this hour?—alone?—I know not her commander, or her people."

"There are other hours besides this, and a sailor is certain of a frank reception from his messmates."

"These slavers are not always willing to be boarded; they carry arms, and know how to keep strangers at a distance."

"Are there no watchwords in the masonry of your trade, by which a brother is known? Such terms as 'stemming the waves with the taffrail,' for instance, or some of these knowing phrases we have lately heard?"

Wilder kept his own keen look on the countenance of the other, as he thus questioned him, and seemed to ponder on what he heard before he ventured a reply.

"Why do you demand this of me?" he coldly asked.

"Because, as I believe that 'faint heart never won fair lady,' so do I believe that indecision never won a ship. You wish a situation, you say; and if I were an admiral, I would make you my flag-captain. At the assizes, when we wish a brief, we throw out the proper feelers. But perhaps I am talking too much at random for an utter stranger. You will, however, remember, that though it is the advice of a lawyer, it is given gratuitously."

"Is it the more to be relied on for so extraordinary liberality?"

"Of that you must judge for yourself," said the stranger in green, very deliberately putting his foot on the ladder, and descending, until no part of his person but his head was seen. "Here I go, literally cutting the waves with my taffrail," he added, descending backward, and seeming to take pleasure in laying particular emphasis on the words. "Adieu, my friend; if we do not meet again, I enjoin you never to forget the rats in the Newport ruin."

He disappeared as he concluded, and in another instant his light form was on the ground. Turning with the most admirable coolness, he gave the bottom of the ladder a trip with one of his feet, and laid the only means of descent prostrate on the earth. Then, looking up at the wondering Wilder, he nodded his head familiarly, repeated his adieu, and passed with a swift step from beneath the arches.

"This is extraordinary, not to say insolent, conduct," muttered Wilder, who by the process was left a prisoner in the ruin. After ascertaining that a fall from the trap might endanger his legs, the young sailor ran to one of the windows of the place, in order to reproach his treacherous comrade, or indeed to assure himself that he was serious in thus deserting him.

The barrister was already out of hailing distance, and, before Wilder had time to decide on what course to take, his active footsteps had led him into the skirts of the town, among the buildings of which his person became immediately lost to the eye.

During all the time occupied by the foregoing scenes and dialogue, Fid and the negro were discussing the contents of the bag, under the fence where they were last seen. As the appetite of the former became appeased, his didactic disposition returned, and at the precise moment when Wilder was left alone in the tower, he was intently engaged in admonishing the black

on the delicate subject of behavior in mixed society.

"And so you see, Guinea," he concluded, "in order to keep a weather-helm in company, you are never to throw all aback and go stern-foremost out of a dispute, as you have this day seen fit to do. According to my l'arning, that Master Nightingale is better in a bar-room than in a squall; and if you had just luffed up on his quarter, when you saw me laying myself athwart his hawse, in the argument, we should have given him a regular jam in the discourse, and then the fellow would have been shamed in the eyes of the bystanders. Who hails? what cook is sticking his neighbor's pig now?"

"Lor'! Misser Fid," cried the black; "here Masser Harry, wid a head out of port-hole, up dere-away in a lighthouse, singin' out like a marine in a boat wid a plug out!"

"Aye, aye, let him alone for hailing a top-gallant yard or a flying-jib-boom! The lad has a voice like a French horn, when he has a mind to tune it! And what the devil is he manning the guns of that weather-beaten wreck for? At all events, if he has to fight his craft alone, there is no one to blame but himself, since he has gone to quarters without beat of drum, or without, in any other manner, seeing fit to muster his people."

As Dick and the negro had both been making the best of their way toward the ruin, from the moment they discovered the situation of their friend, by this time they were within speaking distance of the spot itself. Wilder, in those brief, pithy tones that distinguish the manner in which a sea-officer issues his orders, directed him to raise the ladder. When he was liberated, he demanded, with a sufficiently significant air, if they had observed the direction in which the stranger in green had made his retreat.

"Do you mean the chap in boots, who was for shoving his oar into another man's rullock, a bit ago, on the wharf?"

"The very same."

"He made a slant on the wind until he had weathered yonder bit of a barn, and then he tacked and stretched away off here to the east-and-by-south, going large, with studding-sails alow and aloft, as I think, for he made a devil of a head-way."

"Follow!" cried Wilder, starting forward in the direction indicated by Fid, without waiting to hear any more of the other's explanations.

The search was vain. Although they continued their inquiries until long after the sun had set, no one could give them the smallest tidings of what had become of the stranger in green. Some had seen him, and marveled at his singular costume and bold and wandering look; but, by all accounts, he had disappeared from the town as strangely and mysteriously as he had entered it.

CHAPTER V.

"Are you so brave? I'll have you talked with anon."—CORIOLANUS.

THE good people of the town of Newport sought their rest at an early hour. They were remarkable for that temperance and discretion which, even to this day, distinguish the manners of the inhabitants of New England. By ten, the door of every house in the place was closed for the night; and it is quite probable that, before another hour had passed, scarcely an eye was open, among all those which had been sufficiently alert throughout the day, not only in superintending the interests of their proper owners, but in bestowing wholesome glances at the concerns of the rest of the neighborhood.

The landlord of the "Foul Anchor," as the inn where Fid and the Nightingale had so nearly come to blows was called, scrupulously closed his doors at eight; a sort of expiation by which he endeavored to atone, while he slept, for any moral peccadilloes that he might have committed during the day. Indeed, it was to be observed, as a rule, that those who had the most difficulty in maintaining their good name, on the score of temperance and moderation, were the most rigid in withdrawing, in season, from their daily cares of the world. The Admiral's widow had given no little scandal, in her time, be-

cause lights were so often seen burning in her house long after the hour prescribed by custom for their extinction. There were several other little particulars in which this good lady had also rèndered herself obnoxious to the whispered remarks of some of her female visitants. An Episcopalian herself, she was always observed to be employed with her needle on the evenings of Saturdays, though by no means distinguished for her ordinary industry. It was, however, a sort of manner the good lady had of exhibiting her adherence to the belief that the night of Sunday was the orthodox evening of the Sabbath. On this subject there was, in truth, a species of silent warfare between her and the wife of the principal clergyman of the town. It resulted, happily, in no very striking marks of hostility. The latter was content to retaliate by bringing her work, on the evenings of Sundays, to the house of the dowager, and occasionally interrupting their discourse by a diligent application of the needle for some five or six minutes at a time. Against this contamination Mrs. De Lacey took no other precaution than to play with the leaves of a prayer-book, precisely on the principle that one uses holy water to keep the devil at that distance which the Church has considered safest for its proselytes.*

Let these matters be as they would, by ten o'clock on the night of the day our tale commences, the town of Newport was as still as if it did not contain a living soul. Watchmen there were none; for roguery had not yet begun to thrive openly in the provinces. When, therefore, Wilder and his two companions issued at that hour from their place of retirement into the empty streets, they found them as still as if man had never trod there. Not a candle was to be seen, nor the smallest evidence of human life to be heard. It would seem our adventurers knew their errand well; for, instead of knocking up any of the drowsy publicans to demand admission, they held their way steadily to the water's side; Wilder leading, Fid coming next, and Scipio, in conformity to all usage, bringing up the rear, in his ordinary quiet, submissive manner.

At the margin of the water they found several small boats, moored under the shelter of a neighboring wharf. Wilder gave his companions their directions, and walked to a place convenient for embarking. After waiting the necessary time, the bows of two boats came to the land at the same moment, one of which was governed by the hands of the negro, and the other by those of Fid.

"How's this?" demanded Wilder; "is not one enough? There is some mistake between you."

"No mistake at all," responded Dick, suffering his oar to float on its blade, and running his fingers into his hair, content with his achievement; "no more mistake than there is in taking the sun on a clear day and in smooth water. Guinea is in the boat you hired; but a bad bargain you made of it, as I thought at the time: and so, as 'better late than never' is my rule, I have just been casting an eye over all the craft; if this is not the tightest and fastest rowing clipper of them all, then I am no judge; and yet the parish priest would tell you, if he were here, that my father was a boat-builder, aye, and swear it, too; that is to say, if you paid him well for the same."

"Fellow," returned Wilder, angrily; "you will one day induce me to turn you adrift. Take the boat to the place where you found it, and see it secured as before."

"Turn me adrift!" deliberately repeated Fid; "that would be cutting all your weather lanyards at one blow, Master Harry. Little good would come of Scipio Africa and you, after I should part company. Have you ever fairly logged the time we have sailed together?"

"Aye, have I; but it is possible to break even a friendship of twenty years."

"Saving your presence, Master Harry, I'll be d——d if I believe any such thing. Here is Guinea, who is no better than a

* The Puritans believed that the Sabbath commenced with the setting of the sun on Saturday, and ended at the same hour on Sunday. Thus the latter evening throughout all New England was, and in some measure is still, more observed as a fete than as a time of worship, while the preceding evening is respected with the most rigid observances.

nigger, and therein far from being a fitting messmate to a white man; but, being used to look at his black face for four-and-twenty years, d'ye see, the color has got into my eye, and now it suits as well as another. Then at sea in a dark night, it is not so easy a matter to tell the difference. I am not tired of you yet, Master Harry, and it is no trifle that shall part us."

"Then abandon your habit of making free with the property of others."

"I abandon nothing. No man can say he ever knowed me to quit a deck while a plank stuck to the beams; and shall I abandon, as you call it, my rights? What is the mighty matter, that all hands must be called to see an old sailor punished? You gave a lubberly fisherman, a fellow who has never been in deeper water than his own line will sound, you gave him, I say, a glittering spaniard, just for the use of a bit of a skiff for the night, or, mayhap, for a small reach into the morning. Well, what does Dick do? He says to himself—for d——e if he's any blab to run round a ship grumbling at his officer—so he just says to himself, 'That's too much,' says he; and he looks about to find the worth of it in some of the fisherman's neighbors. Money can be eaten; and, what is better, it may be drunk; therefore, it is not to be pushed overboard with the cook's ashes. I'll warrant me, if the truth could be fairly come by, it would be found that, as to the owners of this here yawl and that there skiff, their mothers are cousins, and that the dollars will go in snuff and strong drink among the whole family—so, no great harm done after all."

Wilder made an impatient gesture to the other to obey, and walked up the bank to give him time to comply. Fid never disputed a positive and distinct order, though he often took so much discretionary latitude in executing those which were less precise. He did not hesitate, therefore, to return the boat; but he did not carry his subordination so far as to do it without complaint. When this act of justice was performed, Wilder entered the skiff; and, seeing that his companions were seated at their oars, he bade them pull down the harbor, admonishing them at the same time to make as little noise as possible.

"The night I rowed you into Louisburg, a-reconnoitering," said Fid, thrusting his left hand into his bosom, while, with his right, he applied sufficient force to the light oar to make the skiff glide swiftly over the water, "that night we muffled everything, even to our tongues. When there is occasion to put stoppers on the mouths of a boat's crew, why, I'm not the man to gainsay it; but, as I am one of them as thinks tongues were just as much made to talk with as the sea was made to live on, I uphold rational conversation in sober society. S'ip. thou Guinea, where the devil are you shoving off the skiff to? —here-away lies the island, and you are for going into yonder bit of a church."

"Lay on your oars," interrupted Wilder; "let the boat drift by this vessel."

They were now in the act of passing the ship which had been warping from the wharfs to an anchorage, and in which the young sailor had so clandestinely heard that Mrs. Wyllys and the fascinating Gertrude were to embark, on the following morning, for the distant province of Carolina. As the skiff floated past, Wilder examined the vessel, by the dim light of the stars, with a seaman's eye. No part of her hull, her spars, or her rigging escaped his notice; and when the whole became confounded, by the distance, in one dark mass of shapeless matter, he leaned his head over the side of the little bark, and mused. To this abstraction Fid presumed to offer no interruption. It had the appearance of a professional duty; a subject that, in his eyes, was endowed with a species of character that might be called sacred. Scipio was habitually silent. After losing many minutes in this manner, Wilder suddenly regained his recollection, and abruptly observed:

"It is a tall ship, and one that should make a long chase!"

"That's as may be," returned the ready Fid. "Should that fellow get a free wind, and his canvas all abroad, it might worry a king's cruiser to get nigh enough to throw the iron on his decks; but jammed

up, close hauled, why, I'd engage to lay on his weather-quarter with the saucy *He*——"

"Boys," interrupted Wilder, "it is now proper that you should know something of my future movements. We have been shipmates, I might almost say messmates, for more than twenty years. I was no better than an infant, Fid, when you brought me to the commander of your ship, and not only was instrumental in saving my life, but in putting me into a good situation to make an officer."

"Aye, aye, you were no great matter, Master Harry, as to bulk; and a short hammock served your turn as well as the captain's berth."

"I owe you a heavy debt, Fid, for that one generous act, and something for your steady adherence to me since."

"Why, yes, I have been pretty steady in my conduct, Master Harry, in this here business, more particularly seeing that I have never let go my grapplings, though you've so often swore to turn me adrift. As for Guinea, here, the chap makes fair weather with you, blow high or blow low, whereas it is no hard matter to get up a squall between us, as might be seen in that small affair about the boat——"

"Say no more of it," interrupted Wilder, whose feelings appeared sensibly touched, as his recollection ran over long-past and bitter-remembered scenes; "you know that little else than death can part us, unless indeed you choose to quit me now. It is right you should know that I am engaged in a desperate pursuit, and one that may easily end in ruin to myself and all who accompany me. I feel reluctant to separate from you, my friends, for it may be a final parting, but, at the same time, you know all the danger."

"Is there much more traveling by land?" bluntly demanded Fid.

"No; the duty, such as it is, will be done entirely on the water."

"Then bring forth your ship's books, and find room for such a mark as a pair of crossed anchors which stand for all the same as so many letters reading 'Richard Fid.'"

"But perhaps when you know——"

"I want to know nothing about it, Master Harry. Haven't I sailed with you often enough under sealed orders to trust my old body once more in your company, without forgetting my duty? What say you, Guinea? will you ship? or shall we land you at once on yonder bit of a low point, and leave you to scrape acquaintance with the clams?"

"'Em berry well off here," muttered the perfectly contented negro.

"Aye, aye, Guinea is like the launch of one of the coasters, always towing in your wake, Master Harry; whereas, I am often luffing athwart your hawse, or getting foul, in some fashion or other, on one of your quarters. Howsomever, we are both shipped, as you see, in this here cruise, with the particulars of which we are both well satisfied. So pass the word among us what is to be done next, and no more parley."

"Remember the cautions you have already received," returned Wilder, who saw that the devotion of his followers was too infinite to need quickening, and who knew, from long and perilous experience, how implicitly he might rely on their fidelity, notwithstanding certain failings, that were perhaps peculiar to their condition; "remember what I have already given in charge; and now pull directly for the ship in the outer harbor."

Fid and the black promptly complied; and the boat was soon skimming the water between the little island, and what might, by comparison, be called the main. As they approached the vessel, the strokes of the oars were moderated, and finally abandoned altogether, Wilder preferring to let the skiff drop down with the tide upon the object he wished well to examine before venturing to board.

"Has not that ship her nettings triced to the rigging?" he demanded, in a voice that was lowered to the tones necessary to escape observation, and which betrayed, at the same time, the interest he took in the reply.

"According to my sight, she has," returned Fid; "your slavers are a little pricked by conscience, and are never over-

bold, unless when they are chasing a young nigger on the coast of Congo. Now, there is about as much danger of a Frenchman's looking in here to-night, with this land breeze and clear sky, as there is of my being made Lord High Admiral of England, a thing not likely to come to pass soon, seeing that the king don't know a great deal of my merit."

"They are, to a certainty, ready to give a warm reception to any boarders!" continued Wilder, who rarely paid much attention to the amplification with which Fid so often saw fit to embellish the discourse. "It would be no easy matter to carry a ship thus prepared, if her people were true to themselves."

"I warrant ye there is a full quarter-watch at least sleeping among her guns, at this very moment, with a bright look-out from her cat-heads and taffrail. I was once on the weather fore yard-arm of the *Hebe*, when I made, here-away to the southwest, a sail coming large upon us——"

"Hist! they are stirring on her decks!"

"To be sure they are. The cook is splitting a log; the captain has most likely sung out for his nightcap."

The voice of Fid was lost in a summons from the ship, that sounded like the roaring of some sea-monster, which had unexpectedly raised his head above the water. The practiced ears of our adventurers instantly comprehended it to be, what it truly was, the manner in which it was not unusual to hail a boat. Without taking time to ascertain that the plashing of oars was to be heard in the distance, Wilder raised his form in the skiff and answered.

"How now?" exclaimed the same strange voice; "there is no one victualed aboard here that speaks thus. Where-away is he that answers?"

"A little on your larboard bow; here, in the shadow of the ship."

"And what are ye about, within the sweep of my hawse?"

"Cutting the waves with my taffrail," returned Wilder, after a moment's hesitation.

"What fool has broke adrift here?" muttered his interrogator. "Pass a blunderbuss forward, and let us see if a civil answer can be drawn from the fellow."

"Hold!" said a calm, authoritative voice from the most distant part of the ship; "it is as it should be; let them approach."

The man in the bows of the vessel bade them come alongside, and the conversation ceased. Wilder had now an opportunity to discover that, as the hail had been intended for another boat, which was still at a distance, he had answered prematurely. But, perceiving that it was too late to retreat with safety, or perhaps only acting in conformity to his original determination, he directed his companions to obey.

"Cutting the waves with the taffrail is, of a surety, not the civilest answer a man can give to a hail," muttered Fid, dropping the blade of his oar into the water; "nor is it matter to be logged, that they have taken offense at the same. Howsomever, Master Harry, if they are so minded as to make a quarrel about the thing, give them as good as they send, and count on manly backers."

No reply was made to the encouraging assurance, for, by this time, the skiff was within a few feet of the ship. Wilder ascended the side of the vessel amid a deep, and, as he felt it to be, an ominous silence. The night was dark, though enough light fell from the stars, that were here and there visible, to render objects sufficiently distinct to the eyes of a seaman. When our young adventurer touched the deck, he cast a hurried and scrutinizing look about him, as if doubts and impressions, which had long been harbored, were all to be resolved by that first view.

An ignorant landsman would have been struck with the order and symmetry with which the tall spars rose toward the heavens, from the black mass of the hull, and with the rigging that hung in the air, one dark line crossing another, until all seemed confounded in the confusion and intricacy of the studied maze. But to Wilder these familiar objects furnished no immediate attraction His first rapid glance had, like that of all seamen, it is

true, been thrown upward, but it was instantly succeeded by the brief though keen examination to which we have just alluded. With the exception of one who, though his form was muffled in a large sea-cloak, seemed to be an officer, not a living creature was visible on the decks. On each side was a dark, frowning battery, arranged in the beautiful and imposing order of marine architecture; but nowhere could he find a trace of the crowd of human beings which usually throng the deck of an armed ship, or that was necessary to render the engines effective. It was quite in rule that most of her people should be in their hammocks at that hour; but still it was customary to leave a sufficient number on the watch, to look to the safety of the vessel. Finding himself so unexpectedly confronted with a single individual, our adventurer began to be sensible of the awkwardness of his situation, and of the necessity of some explanation.

"You are no doubt surprised, sir," he said, "at the lateness of the hour that I have chosen for my visit."

"You were certainly expected earlier," was the laconic answer.

"Expected!"

"Aye, expected. Have I not seen you and your two companions who are in the boat reconnoitering us half the day from the wharfs of the town, and even from the old tower on the hill! What did all this curiosity foretell, but an intention to come on board?"

"This is odd, I will acknowledge!" exclaimed Wilder, in some alarm. "And, then, you had notice of my intentions?"

"Hark ye, my friend," interrupted the other, indulging in a low laugh; "from your outfit and appearance, I think I am right in calling you a seaman. Do you imagine that glasses were forgotten in the inventory of this ship? or, do you fancy that we don't know how to use them?"

"You must have strong reasons for looking so deeply into the movements of strangers on the land?"

"Hum! Perhaps we expect our cargo from the country. But I suppose you have not come so far in the dark to look at our manifest. You would see the captain?"

"Do I not see him?"

"Where?" demanded the other, with a start that proved he stood in salutary awe of his superior.

"In yourself."

"I! I have not got so high in the books, though my time may yet come some fair day. Hark ye, friend; you passed under the stern of yonder ship, which has been hauling into the stream, in coming out to us?"

"Certainly; she lies, as you see, directly in my course."

"A wholesome-looking craft that! and one well found, I warrant you. She is quite ready to be off, they tell me."

"It would so seem; her sails are bent, and she floats like a ship that is full."

"Of what?" abruptly demanded the other.

"Of articles mentioned in her manifest, no doubt. But you seem light yourself; if you are to load at this port, it will be some days before you put to sea."

"Hum! I don't think we will be long after our neighbor," the other remarked, a little dryly. Then, as if he might have said too much, he added hastily: "We slavers carry little else, you know, than our shackles and a few extra tierces of rice; the rest of our ballast is made up of these guns, and the stuff to put into them."

"And is it usual for ships in the trade to carry so heavy an armament?"

"Perhaps it is—perhaps not. To own the truth, there is not much law on the coast, and the strong arm often does as much as the right. Our owners, therefore, I believe, think it quite as well there should be no lack of guns and ammunition on board."

"They should also give you people to work them."

"They have forgotten that part of their wisdom certainly."

His words were nearly drowned by the same gruff voice that had brought to the skiff of Wilder, which sent another hoarse summons across the water, rolling out sounds that were intended to say—

"Boat ahoy!"

The answer was quick, short and nautical; but it was rendered in a low, cautious tone. The individual, with whom Wilder had been holding such equivocating parlance, seemed embarrassed by the sudden interruption, and at a loss to know how to conduct himself. He had already made a motion toward leading his visitor to the cabin, when the sounds of oars were heard clattering in a boat alongside of the ship, announcing that he was too late. Bidding the other remain where he was, he sprang to the gangway, in order to receive those who had just arrived.

By this sudden desertion, Wilder found himself in entire possession of the part of the vessel where he stood. It gave him a better opportunity to renew his examination; and to cast a scrutinizing eye over the new-comers.

Some five or six athletic-looking seamen ascended from the boat in profound silence. A short and whispered conference took place between them and their officer, who appeared both to receive a report and to communicate an order. When these preliminary matters were ended, a line was lowered from a whip on the main-yard, the end evidently dropping into the boat. In a moment, the burden it was intended to transfer to the ship was swinging in the air, midway between the water and the spar. It then slowly descended, inclining in-board, until it was safely, and somewhat carefully, landed on the deck of the vessel.

During the whole of this process, which in itself had nothing extraordinary, or out of the daily practice of large vessels in port, Wilder had strained his eyes, until they appeared nearly ready to start from their sockets. The black mass which had been lifted from the boat, seemed, while it lay against the background of sky, to possess the proportions of the human form. The seamen gathered about this object. After much bustle, and a good deal of low conversation, the burden or body, whichever it might be called, was raised by the men, and the whole disappeared together behind the masts, boats and guns, which crowded the forward part of the vessel.

The whole event was of a character to attract the attention of Wilder. His eye was not, however, so intently riveted on the group in the gangway as to prevent his detecting a dozen black objects that were suddenly thrust forward from behind the spars and other black masses of the vessel. They might be blocks swinging in the air, but they bore a strong resemblance to human heads. The simultaneous manner in which they appeared and disappeared served to confirm this impression; nor, to confess the truth, had our adventurer any doubt that curiosity had drawn so many inquiring countenances from their respective places of concealment.

He had not much leisure, however, to reflect on all these little accompaniments of his situation, before he was rejoined by his former companion, who, to all appearance, was again left to himself in entire possession of the deck.

"You know the trouble of getting off the people from the shore," the officer observed, "when a ship is ready to sail."

"You seem to have a summary method of hoisting them in," returned Wilder.

"Ah! you speak of the fellow on the whip? Your eyes are good, friend, to tell a jack-knife from a marlin-spike, at this distance. But the lad was mutinous; that is, not absolutely mutinous—but drunk. As mutinous as a man can well be, who can neither speak, sit, nor stand."

Then, as if as well content with his humor as with this simple explanation, the other laughed and chuckled in a manner that showed he was in perfect good humor with himself.

"But all this time you are left on deck," he quickly added, "and the captain is waiting your appearance in the cabin Follow; I will be your pilot."

"Hold," said Wilder; "will it not be as well to announce my visit?"

"He knows it already; little takes place aboard here that does not reach his ears before it gets into the log-book."

Wilder made no further objection, but indicated his readiness to proceed. The other led the way to the bulk-head which separated the principal cabin from the

quarter-deck of the ship; pointing to a door, he then whispered—

"Tap twice; if he answer, go in."

Wilder did as directed. His first summons was either unheard or disregarded. On repeating it, he was commanded to enter. The young seaman opened the door, with a crowd of sensations, that will find their solution in the succeeding parts of our narrative, and instantly stood, under the light of a powerful lamp, in the presence of the stranger in green.

CHAPTER VI.

"The simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep, who can."—WORDSWORTH.

THE apartment in which our adventurer now found himself afforded no bad illustration of the character of the occupant. In its form and proportions it was a cabin of the usual size and arrangements; but in its furniture and equipments it exhibited a singular admixture of luxury and martial preparation. The lamp, which swung from the upper deck, was of solid silver; and though adapted to its present situation by mechanical ingenuity, there was that in its shape and ornaments which betrayed it had once been used before some shrine of a more sacred character. Massive candlesticks, of the same precious metal, and which partook of the same ecclesiastical formation, were on a venerable table, whose mahogany was glittering with the polish of half a century, and whose gilded claws and carved supporters bespoke an original destination very different from the ordinary service of a ship. A couch, covered with cut velvet, stood along the transom; while a divan of blue silk lay against the bulkhead opposite, manifesting, by its fashion, its materials, and its pile of pillows, that even Asia had been made to contribute to the ease of its luxurious owner. In addition to these prominent articles, there were cut-glass mirrors, plate and even hangings; each of which, by something peculiar in its fashion or materials, bespoke an origin different from that of its neighbor. In short, splendor and elegance seemed to have been much more consulted than propriety or taste, in the selection of most of those articles which had been oddly enough made to contribute to the caprices or to the comfort of their singular possessor.

In the midst of this medley of wealth and luxury appeared the frowning appendages of war. The cabin included four of those dark cannon whose weight and number had been first to catch the attention of Wilder. Notwithstanding they were placed in such close proximity to the articles of ease just enumerated, it only needed a seaman's eye to perceive that they stood ready for immediate service, and that five minutes of preparation would strip the place of all its tinsel, and leave it a warm and well-protected battery. Pistols, sabers, half-pikes, boarding axes, and all the minor implements of marine warfare, were arranged about the cabin in such a manner as to aid in giving it an appearance of wild embellishment, while, at the same time, each was convenient to the hand.

Around the mast was placed a stand of muskets; and strong wooden bars, that were evidently made to fit in brackets on each side of the door, sufficiently showed that the bulk-head might easily be converted into a barrier. The entire arrangement proclaimed that the cabin was considered the citadel of the ship. In support of this latter opinion there was also a hatch, communicating with the apartments of the inferior officers, and which opened a direct passage into the magazine. These dispositions, a little different from what he had been accustomed to see, instantly struck the eye of Wilder, though leisure was not then given to reflect on their usages and objects.

There was a latent expression of satisfaction, something modified perhaps by irony, on the countenance of the stranger in green (for he was still clad as when first introduced to the reader), as he arose, on the entrance of his visitor. The two stood several moments without speaking, when the pretented barrister saw fit to break the awkward silence.

"To what happy circumstance is this ship indebted for the honor of such a visit?" he demanded.

"I believe I may answer, to the invitation of her captain," Wilder answered, with a steadiness and calmness equal to that displayed by the other.

"Did he show you his commission in assuming that office? They say at sea, I believe, that no cruiser should be found without a commission."

"And what say they at the universities on this material point?"

"I see I may as well lay aside my gown, and own the marlinspike!" returned the other, smiling. "There is something about the trade—*profession*, though, I believe, is your favorite word—there is something about the profession which betrays us to each other. Yes, Mr. Wilder," he added, with dignity, motioning to his guest to imitate his example, and take a seat, "I am, like yourself, a seaman bred; and happy am I to add, the commander of this gallant vessel."

"Then must you admit that I have not intruded without a sufficient warrant."

"I confess the same. My ship has filled your eye agreeably; nor shall I be slow to acknowledge that I have seen enough about your air and person to make me wish to be an older acquaintance. You want service?"

"One should be ashamed of idleness in these stirring times."

"It is well. This is an oddly constructed world in which we live, Mr. Wilder. Some think themselves in danger with a foundation beneath them no less solid than *terra firma*, while others are content to trust their fortunes on the sea. So, again, some there are who believe praying is the business of man; and then come others who are sparing of their breath, and take those favors for themselves which they have not always the leisure or the inclination to ask for. No doubt you thought it prudent to inquire into the nature of our trade, before you came hither in quest of employment?"

"You are said to be a slaver, among the townsmen of Newport."

"They are never wrong, your village gossips! If witchcraft ever truly existed on earth, the first of the cunning tribe has been a village inn-keeper; the second, its doctor: and the third, its priest. The right to the fourth honor may be disputed between the barber and the tailor. Roderick!"

The Captain accompanied the word with which he so unceremoniously interrupted himself, by striking a light blow on a Chinese gong, which, among other curiosities, was suspended from one of the beams of the upper deck, within reach of his hand.

"I say, Roderick, dost sleep?"

A light and active boy darted out of one of the two little state-rooms which were constructed on the quarters of the ship, and answered to the summons by announcing his presence.

"Has the boat returned?"

The reply was in the affirmative.

"Has she been successful?"

"The General is in his room, sir, and can give you an answer better than I."

"Then, let the General appear, and report the result of his campaign."

Wilder was by far too deeply interested to break the sudden reverie into which his companion had fallen, even by breathing as loud as usual. The boy descended through the hatch like a serpent gliding into his hole, or, rather, a fox darting into his burrow, and then a profound stillness reigned in the cabin. The commander of the ship leaned his head on his hand, appearing unconscious of the presence of a stranger. The silence might have been of much longer duration, had it not been interrupted by the appearance of a third person. A straight, rigid form slowly elevated itself through the little hatchway, very much in the manner that theatrical specters are seen to make their appearance on the stage, and about half of the person was visible, when it ceased to rise, and turned its disciplined countenance on the captain.

"I wait for orders," said a mumbling voice, which issued from lips that were hardly perceived to move.

Wilder started at this unexpected vision, nor was the stranger wanting in an aspect sufficiently remarkable to produce surprise

in any spectator. The face was that of a man of fifty, with the lineaments thoroughly indurated by service. Its color was a uniform red, with the exception of one of those expressive little fiberous tell-tales on each cheek, which bear so striking a resemblance to the mazes of the vine, and which would seem to be the true origin of the proverb which says that "Good wine needs no brush." The crown of the head was bald; but around each ear was a mass of grizzled hair, pomatumed and combed into military bristles. The neck was long, and supported by a black stock; the shoulders, arms, and body, were those of a tall man; and the whole were enveloped in an overcoat, which, though it had something methodical in its fashion, was evidently intended as a sort of domino. The captain raised his head as the other spoke, exclaiming, as if taken by surprise:

"Ah! General, are you at your post? Did you find the land?"

"Yes."

"And the point? and the man?"

"Both."

"What did you?"

"Obey orders."

"That was right. You are a jewel of an executive officer, General; as such, I wear you near my heart. Did the fellow complain?"

"He was gagged."

"A summary method of closing remonstrance. It is as it should be, General; as usual, you have merited my approbation."

"Then reward me for it."

"In what manner? You are already as high in rank as I can elevate you. The next step must be knighthood."

"Pshaw! my men are no better than militia. They want coats."

"They shall have them. His Majesty's guard shall not be half so well equipped. General, I wish you a good night."

The figure descended in the same rigid spectral manner as it had risen on the sight, leaving Wilder again alone with the Captain of the ship. The latter seemed suddenly struck with the fact that this odd interview had occurred in the presence of one who was nearly a stranger, and that, in his eyes at least, it might appear to require some explanation.

"My friend," he said, with an air something explanatory, while it was at the same time not a little haughty, "commands what, in a more regular cruiser, would be called the 'marine guard.' He has gradually risen, by service, from the rank of a subaltern to the high station which he now fills. You perceive he smells of the camp?"

"More than of the ship. Is it usual for slavers to be so well provided with military equipments? I find you armed at all points."

"You would know more of us, before we proceed to drive our bargain," the Captain answered, with a smile. He then opened a little casket that stood on the table, and drew from it a parchment, which he coolly handed to Wilder, saying, as he did so, with one of the quick searching glances of his restless eye, "You will see by that we have 'letters of marque,' and are duly authorized to fight the battles of the King, while we are conducting our own more peaceable affairs."

"This is the commission of a brig!"

"True, true. I have given you the wrong paper. I believe you will find this more accurate."

"This is truly a commission for the 'good ship Seven Sisters;' but you surely carry more than ten guns; and then, these in your cabin throw nine instead of four pound shot."

"You are as precise as if you had been the barrister, and I the blundering seaman. I dare say you have heard of such a thing as stretching a commission?" continued the Captain, carelessly throwing the parchment back among a pile of similar documents. Then rising from his seat, he began to pace the cabin with quick steps, as he continued, "I need not tell you, Mr. Wilder, that ours in a hazardous pursuit. Some call it lawless. But as I am little addicted to theological disputes, we will waive the question. You have not come here without knowing your errand?"

"I am in search of a berth."

"Doubtless you have reflected well on the matter, and know your own mind as to the trade in which you would sail. In order that no time may be wasted, and that our dealings may be frank, as becomes two honest seamen, I will confess to you at once that I have need of you. A brave and skillful man, one older, though I dare say not better than yourself, occupied that larboard state-room, within the month; poor fellow, he is food for fishes ere this."

"He was drowned?"

"Not he! He died in open battle with a king's ship!"

"A king's ship! Have you then stretched your commission so far as to find a warranty for giving battle to his Majesty's cruisers?"

"Is there no king but George the Second? Perhaps she bore the white flag, perhaps a Dane. But he was truly a gallant fellow; and there lies his berth, as empty as the day he was carried from it to be cast into the sea. He was a man fit to succeed to the command, should an evil star shine on my fate. I think I could die easier, were I to know this noble vessel was to be transmitted to one who would make such use of her as should be."

"Doubtless your owners would provide a successor, in the event of such a calamity."

"My owners are very reasonable," returned the other, casting another searching glance at his guest, which compelled Wilder to lower his own eyes to the cabin floor; "they seldom trouble me with importunities or orders."

"They are indulgent! I see that flags at least were not forgotten in your inventory; do they also give you permission to wear any of those ensigns, as you may please?"

As this question was put, the expressive and understanding looks of the two seamen met. The Captain drew a flag from the half-open locker, where it had caught the attention of his visitor, and, letting the roll unfold itself on the deck, he answered:

"This is the lily of France, you see. No bad emblem of your stainless Frenchman. An escutcheon of pretense without spot, but, nevertheless, a little soiled by use. Here you have the calculating Dutchman; plain, substantial and cheap. It is a flag I little like. If the ship be of value, her owners are not often willing to dispose of her without a price. This is your swaggering Hamburger. He is rich in the possession of one town, and makes his boast of it in these towers. Of the rest of his mighty possessions he wisely says nothing in his allegory. These are the crescents of Turkey; a moon-struck nation, that believe themselves the inheritors of heaven. Let them enjoy their birthright in peace; it is seldom they are found looking for its blessings on the high seas; and these, the little satellites that play about the mighty moon, your barbarians of Africa. I hold but little communion with these wide-trousered gentry, for they seldom deal in aught gainful. And yet," he added, glancing his eye at the silken divan, before which Wilder was seated, "I have met the rascals; nor have we parted entirely without communication. Ah! here comes the man I like; your gorgeous Spaniard! This field of yellow reminds one of the riches of his mines; and this crown! one might fancy it of beaten gold, and stretch forth a hand to grasp the treasure. What a blazonry is this for a galleon! Here is the humbler Portuguese; and yet is he not without a wealthy look. I have often fancied there were true Brazilian diamonds in this kingly bauble. Yonder crucifix, which you see hanging in pious proximity to my state-room door, is a specimen of the sort I mean."

Wilder turned his head to throw a look on the valuable emblem, that was really suspended from the bulkhead, within a few inches of the spot the other named. After satisfying his curoisty, he was in the act of giving his attention again to the flags, when he detected another of those penetrating, but stolen glances, with which his companion so often read the countenance of his associates. It is probable that the Captain was endeavoring to discover the effect his profuse display of wealth had produced on the mind

of his visitor. Let that be as it would, Wilder smiled; for, at that moment, the idea first occurred that the ornaments of the cabin had been thus studiously arranged with an expectation of his arrival, and with the wish that their richness might strike him favorably. The other caught the expression of his eye; and perhaps he mistook its meaning, when he suffered his construction of what it said to animate him to pursue his whimsical analysis of the flags, with an air still more cheerful and vivacious than before.

"These double-headed monsters are land-birds, and seldom risk a flight over deep waters," he continued; "they are not for me. Your hardy, valiant Dane; your sturdy Swede; a nest of smaller fry," he continued, passing his hand rapidly over a dozen little rolls as they lay, each in its own repository, "who spread their bunting like larger states; and your luxurious Neapolitan. Ah! here comes the keys of heaven! This is a flag to die under; I lay yard-arm and yard-arm, once, under that very bit of bunting, with a heavy corsair from Algiers——"

"What! Did you choose to fight under the banners of the Church?"

"In mere devotion. I pictured to myself the surprise that would overcome the barbarian when he should find that we did not go to prayers. We gave but a round or two, before he swore that Allah had decreed he might surrender. There was a moment, while I luffed up on his weather-quarter, I believe, that the Mussulman thought the whole of the sacred conclave was afloat, and that the fall of Mohammed and his offspring was nigh. I provoked the conflict, I will confess, in showing him these peaceful keys, which he is dull enough to think open half the strong-boxes in Christendom."

"When he had confessed his error you let him go?"

"Hum!—with my blessing. There was some interchange of commodities between us, and we parted. I left him smoking his pipe, in a heavy sea, with his fore-topmast over the side, his mizzen-mast under his counter, and some six or seven holes in his bottom, that let in the water just as fast as the pumps discharged it. You see he was in a fair way to acquire his portion of the inheritance. But Heaven had ordained it, and he was satisfied!"

"And what flags are these which you have passed? They seem rich and many."

"These are England's; like herself, aristocratic, party-colored, and a good deal touched by humor. Here is bunting to note all ranks and conditions, as if men were not made of the same flesh, and the people of one kingdom might not all sail honest under the same emblems. Here is my Lord High Admiral; your St. George; your field of red, and blue, as chance may give you a leader, or the humor of the moment prevail; the stripes of mother India, and the royal standard itself!"

"The royal standard!"

"Why not? a commander is termed 'a monarch in his ship.' Aye, this is the standard of the King; and, what is more, it has been worn in the presence of an admiral!"

"This needs explanation!" exclaimed his listener, who seemed to feel much that sort of horror that a churchman would discover at the detection of sacrilege. "To wear the royal standard in presence of a flag! We all know how difficult, and even dangerous, it becomes to sport a simple pennant with the eye of a king's cruiser on us——"

"I love to flaunt the rascals!" interrupted the other, with a smothered, but bitter laugh. "There is pleasure in the thing! In order to punish, they must possess the power; an experiment often made, but never successful. You understand balancing accounts with the law, by showing a broad sheet of canvas. I need say no more."

"And which of all these flags do you most use?" demanded Wilder, after a moment of intense thought.

"As to mere sailing, I am as whimsical as a girl in her teens in the choice of her ribbons. I will often show you a dozen in a day. Many is the worthy trader who has gone into port with his veritable account of this Dutchman, or that Dane, with whom he has spoken in the offing.

As to fighting, though I have been known to indulge a humor, too, in that particular, still there is one which I most affect."

"And that is——"

The Captain kept his hand for a moment on the roll he had touched, and seemed to read the very soul of his visitor, so intent and keen was his look the while. Then, suffering the bunting to fall, a deep, blood-red field, without relief or ornament of any sort, unfolded itself, as he answered, with emphasis—

"This."

"That is the color of a rover!"

"Aye, it is *real!* I like it better than your gloomy fields of black, with deaths' heads, and other childish scarecrows. It threatens nothing; but merely says, 'Such is the price at which I am to be bought.' Mr. Wilder," he added, losing the mixture of irony and pleasantry with which he had supported the previous dialogue, in an air of authority, "we understand each other. It is time that each should sail under his proper colors. I need not tell you who I am?"

"I believe it is unnecessary," said Wilder. "If I can comprehend these palpable signs, I stand in presence of—of——"

"The Red Rover," continued the other, observing that he hesitated to pronounce the appalling name. "It is true; and I hope this interview is the commencement of a durable and firm friendship. I know not the secret cause, but from the moment of our meeting, a strong and indefinable interest has drawn me toward you. Perhaps I felt the void which my situation has drawn about me; be that as it may, I receive you with a longing heart and open arms."

Though it must be very evident, from what preceded this open avowal, that Wilder was not ignorant of the character of the ship on board of which he had just ventured, yet did he not receive the acknowledgment without embarrassment. The reputation of this renowned freebooter, his daring, his acts of liberality and licentiousness so frequently blended, and his desperate disregard of life on all occasions, were probably crowding together in the recollection of our more youthful adventurer, and caused him to feel that species of responsible hesitation, to which we are all more subject on the occurrence of important events, be they ever so much expected.

"You have not mistaken my purpose, or my suspicions," he at length answered, "for I own I have come in search of this very ship. I accept the service; from this moment, you will rate me in whatever station you may think me best able to discharge my duty with credit."

"You are next to myself. In the morning the same shall be proclaimed on the quarter-deck; and in the event of my death, unless I am deceived in my man, you will prove my successor. This may strike you as sudden confidence. It is so, in part, I must acknowledge; but our shipping lists cannot be opened, like those of the King, by beat of drum in the streets of the metropolis; and then I am no judge of the human heart, if my frank reliance on your faith does not in itself strengthen your good feelings in my favor."

"It does!" exclaimed Wilder with sudden and strong emphasis.

The Rover smiled calmly, as he continued—

"Young gentlemen of your years are apt to carry no small portion of their hearts in their hands. But notwithstanding this seeming sympathy, in order that you may have sufficient respect for the discretion of your leader, it is necessary that I should say that we have met before. I was apprised of your intention to seek me out, and to offer to join me."

"It is impossible," cried Wilder. "No human being——"

"Can ever be certain his secrets are safe," interrupted the other, "when he carries a face as ingenuous as your own. It is but four-and-twenty hours since you were in the good town of Boston."

"I admit that much; but——"

"You will soon admit the rest. You were too curious in your inquiries of the dolt who declares he was robbed by us of his provisions and sails. The false-tongued villain! It may be well for him to keep from my path, or he may get a

lesson that shall prick his honesty. Does he think such pitiful game as he would induce me to spread a single inch of canvas, or even lower a boat into the sea?"

"Is not this statement, then, true?" demanded Wilder, in a surprise he took no pains to conceal.

"True! Am I what report has made? Look keenly at the monster, that nothing may escape you," returned the Rover, with a hollow laugh, in which scorn struggled to keep down the feelings of wounded pride. "Where are the horns, and the cloven foot? Snuff the air: is it not tainted with sulphur? But enough of this. I knew of your inquiries, and liked your mien. In short, you were my study; and though my approaches were made with some caution they were sufficiently nigh to effect the object. You pleased me, Wilder; and I hope the satisfaction may be mutual."

The newly engaged buccaneer bowed to the compliment of his superior, and appeared at some little loss for a reply. As if to get rid of the subject at once he hurriedly observed—

"As we now understand each other, I will intrude no longer, but leave you for the night, and return to my duty in the morning."

"Leave me!" returned the Rover, stopping short in his walk, and fastening his eye keenly on the other. "It is not usual for my officers to leave me at this hour. A sailor should love his ship, and never sleep out of her unless on compulsion."

"We may as well understand each other," said Wilder, quickly. "If it is to be a slave, and like one of the bolts, a fixture in the vessel, that you need me, our bargain is at an end."

"Hum! I admire your spirit, sir, much more than your discretion. You will find me an attached friend, and one who little likes a separation, however short. Is there not enough to content your here? I will not speak of such low considerations as those which administer to the ordinary appetites. But you have been taught the value of reason—here are books; you have taste—here is elegance; you are poor—here is wealth."

"They amount to nothing without liberty," coldly returned the other.

"And what is this liberty you ask? I hope, young man, you would not so soon betray the confidence you have just received. Our acquaintance is but short, and I may have been too hasty in my faith."

"I must return to the land," Wilder added, firmly, "if it be only to know that I am trusted, and not a prisoner."

"There is a generous sentiment, or deep villainy in all this," resumed the Rover, after a minute of thought. "I will believe the former. Declare to me that, while in the town of Newport, you will inform no soul of the true character of this ship."

"I will swear it," eagerly interrupted Wilder.

"On this cross," rejoined the Rover, with a sarcastic laugh; "on the diamond-mouthed cross! No, sir," he added, with a proud curl of the lip, as he cast the jewel contemptuously aside; "oaths are made for men who need laws to keep them to their promises; I need no more than the clear and unequivocal affirmation of a gentleman."

"Then, plainly and unequivocally do I declare, that, while in Newport, I will discover the character of this ship to no one, without your wish or order so to do. Nay, more——"

"No more. It is wise to be sparing of our pledges, and to say no more than the occasion requires. The time may come when you can do good to yourself, without harming me, by being unfettered by a promise. In an hour you shall land; that time will be needed to make you acquainted with the terms of your enlistment, and to grace my rolls with your name. Roderick," he added, again touching the gong, "you are wanted, boy."

The same active lad that had made his appearance at the first summons, ran up the steps from the cabin beneath, and announced his presence again by his voice.

"Roderick," continued the Rover, "this is my future lieutenant, and of course your officer and my friend. Will you take refreshment, sir? There is little that man needs, which Roderick cannot supply!"

"I thank you; I have need of none."

"Then have the goodness to follow the boy. He will show you into the dining apartment beneath, and give you the written regulations. In an hour, you will have digested the code, and by that time I shall be with you. Throw the light more upon the ladder, boy; you can descend *without* a ladder though, it would seem, or I should not, at this moment, have the pleasure of your company."

The intelligent smile of the Rover was unanswered by any corresponding evidence from the subject of his joke, that he found satisfaction in the remembrance of the awkward situation in which he had been left in the tower. The former caught the displeased expression of the other's countenance, as he gravely prepared to follow the boy, who already stood in the hatchway with a light. Advancing a step, with the grace and tones of a man of breeding, he said quickly—

"Mr. Wilder, I owe you an apology for my seeming rudeness at parting on the hill. Though I believed you mine, I was not sure of my acquisition. You will readily see how necessary it might be, to one in my situation, to throw off a companion at such a moment."

Wilder turned, with a countenance from which every shade of displeasure had vanished, and motioned to him to say no more.

"It was awkward enough, certainly, to find one's self in such a prison; but I feel the justice of what you say. I might have done the very thing myself, if the same presence of mind were at hand to help me."

"The good man who grinds in the Newport ruin must be in a sad way, since all the rats are leaving his mill," cried the Rover, beckoning his temporary adieus, as his companion followed the boy.

Wilder freely returned the open, cordial laugh; and then, as he descended, the cabin was left to him who a few minutes before had been found in its quiet possession.

CHAPTER VII.

"The world affords no law to make thee rich;
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this.
Apoth. My poverty, but not my will, consents."
—ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE Rover arrested his step, as the other disappeared, and stood for more than a minute in an attitude of high and self-congratulating triumph. He was exulting in his success. But though his intelligent face betrayed the satisfaction of the inward man, it was illumined by no expression of vulgar joy. It was the countenance of one who was suddenly relieved from intense care, rather than that of a man who was greedy of profiting by the services of others. Indeed, it would have been difficult for a keen observer to detect a shade of regret in the lightings of his seductive smile, or in the momentary flashes of his changeful eye. The feeling, however, quickly passed away, and his whole figure and countenance resumed the ordinary careless mien in which he most indulged in his hours of ease.

After allowing sufficient time for the boy to conduct Wilder to the cabin below, and to put him in possession of the regulations for the police of the ship, the Captain again touched the gong, and once more summoned the former to his presence. The lad, had, however, to approach the elbow of his master, and to speak thrice, before the other was conscious that he had answered his call.

"Roderick," said the Rover, after a long pause, "are you there?"

"I am here," added a low and mournful voice.

"Ah! you gave him the regulations?"

"I did."

"And he reads?"

"He reads."

"It is well. I would speak to the General. Roderick, you must have need of rest; good-night; let the General be summoned to a council and—good-night, my Roderick."

The boy made an assenting reply; but, instead of springing with his former alacrity to execute the order, he lingered a moment near his master's chair. Failing, however, in his wish to catch his eye, he reluctantly descended the stairs which led into the lower cabins, and was seen no more that night.

It is needless to describe the manner in which the General made his second appearance. It differed in no particular from his former *entree*, except that, on this occasion the whole of his person was developed. He appeared a tall, upright form, that was far from being destitute of natural proportions, but which had been so exquisitely drilled into simultaneous movement, that the several members had so far lost the power of volition as to render it impossible for one of them to stir, without producing something like a correspondent demonstration in all of his fellows. This rigid and well regulated personage, after making a military bow to his superior, helped himself to a chair, in which, after some little time lost in preparation, he seated himself in silence. The Rover seemed conscious of his presence, for he acknowledged his salute by a gentle inclination of his own head; though he did not appear to think it necessary to suspend his ruminations the more on that account. At length, however, he turned short upon his companion, and said abruptly—"General, the campaign is not finished."

"What remains? The field is won, and the enemy is a prisoner."

"Aye, your part of the adventure is well achieved, but much of mine remains to be done. You saw the youth in the lower cabin?"

"I did."

"And how did you like his appearance?"

"Maritime."

"That is as much to say you like him not."

"I like discipline."

"I am much mistaken if you do not find him to your taste on the quarter-deck. Let that be as it may, I have still a favor to ask of you."

"A favor!—it is getting late."

"Did I say a 'favor?' There is duty to be done."

"I wait your orders."

"It is necessary that we use great precaution; for, as you know——"

"I wait your orders," laconically repeated the other.

The Rover compressed his mouth, and a smile struggled about the nether lip; but it changed into a look half bland, half authoritative, as he continued——"

"You will find two seamen in a skiff alongside the ship; the one is white, and the other is black. These men you will have conducted into the vessel—into one of the forward staterooms—and you will have them both thoroughly intoxicated."

"It shall be done," returned he who was called the General, rising, and marching with long strides toward the door of the cabin.

"Pause a moment," added the Rover; "what agent will you use?"

"Nightingale has the strongest head but one in the ship."

"He is too far gone already. I sent him ashore to look about for any straggling seamen who might like our service; and I found him in a tavern, with all the fastenings off his tongue, declaiming like a lawyer who had taken a fee from both parties. Besides, he had a quarrel with one of these very men, and it is probable they would get to blows in their cups."

"I will do it myself. My nightcap is waiting for me; and it is only to lace it a little tighter than common."

The Rover seemed content with this assurance; for he expressed his satisfaction with a familiar nod of the head. The soldier was about to depart, when he was again interrupted—

"One thing more, General; there is your captive."

"Shall I make him drunk, too?"

"By no means. Let him be conducted thither."

The General made an ejaculation of assent, and left the cabin. "It were weak," thought the Rover, as he resumed his walk up and down the apartment, "to trust too much to an ingenuous face and

youthful enthusiasm. I am deceived if the boy has not had reason to think himself disgusted with the world and ready to embark in any romantic enterprise; but still, to be deceived might be fatal therefore will I be prudent, even to excess of caution. He is tied in an extraordinary manner to these two seamen. I would I knew his history! But that will come in proper time. The men must remain as hostages for his own return and for his faith. If he prove false, why they are seamen; and many men are expended in this wild service of ours! It is well arranged; and no suspicion of any plot on our part will wound the sensitive pride of the boy, if he be, as I would gladly think, a true man."

Such was in a great manner, the train of thought in which the Rover indulged, for many minutes after his military companion had left him. His lips moved; smiles and dark shades of thought, in turn chased each other from his speaking countenance, which betrayed all the sudden and violent changes that denoted the workings of a busy spirit within. While thus engrossed in mind, his step became more rapid, and, at times, he gesticulated a little extravagantly, when he found himself, in a sudden turn, unexpectedly confronted by a form that seemed to rise on his sight like a vision.

While most engaged in his own humors, two powerful seamen had, unheeded, entered the cabin; and, after silently depositing a human figure in a seat, they withdrew without speaking. It was before this personage that the Rover now found himself. The gaze was mutual, long and uninterrupted by a syllable from either party. Surprise and indecision held the Rover mute, while wonder and alarm appeared to have literally frozen the faculties of the other. At length the former, suffering a quaint and peculiar smile to gleam for a moment across his countenance, said abruptly——

"I welcome Sir Hector Homespun!"

The eyes of the confounded tailor—for it was no other than that garrulous acquaintance of the reader who had fallen into the toils of the Rover—the eyes of the goodman rolled from right to left, embracing in their wanderings the medley of elegance and warlike preparation that they everywhere met, never failing to return, from each greedy look, to devour the figure that stood before him.

"I say, welcome Sir Hector Homespun!" repeated the Rover.

"The Lord will be lenient to the sins of the miserable father of seven small children!" ejaculated the tailor. "It is but little, valiant pirate, that can be gotton from a hard-working, upright tradesman, who sits from the rising to the setting of the sun, bent over his labor."

"These are debasing terms for chivalry, Sir Hector," interrupted the Rover, laying his hand on the little riding-whip, which had been thrown carelessly on the cabin table, and tapping the shoulder of the tailor with the same, as if he was a sorcerer, and would disenchant the other with a touch.

"Cheer up, honest and loyal subject; fortune has at length ceased to frown; it is but a few hours since you complained that no custom came to your shop from this vessel, and now you are in a fair way to do the business of the whole ship."

"Ah! honorable and magnanimous Rover," rejoined Homespun, whose fluency returned with his senses, "I am an impoverished and undone man. My life has been one of weary and probationary hardships. Five bloody and cruel wars——"

"Enough! I have said that fortune was just beginning to smile. Clothes are as necessary to gentlemen of our profession as to the parish priest. You shall not baste a seam without your reward. Behold!" he added, touching the spring of a secret drawer, which flew open, and discovered a confused pile of gold, in which the coins of nearly every Christian people were blended, "we are not without the means of paying those who serve us faithfully."

The sudden exhibition of a hoard of wealth, which not only greatly exceeded any thing of the kind he had ever before witnessed, but which actually surpassed his limited imaginative powers, was not without its effect on the sensitive feelings

of the goodman. After feasting on the sight for the few moments that his companion left the treasure exposed to view, he turned to the envied possessor of so much gold, and demanded—the tones of increased confidence gradually stealing into his voice, as the inward man felt additional motives of encouragement—

"And what am I expected to perform, mighty seaman, for my portion of this wealth?"

"That which you daily perform on the land—to cut, to fashion, and to sew. Perhaps, too, your talent at a masquerade dress may occasionally be taxed."

"Ah! they are lawless and irreligious devices of the enemy, to lead men into sin and worldly abominations. But, worthy mariner, there is my disconsolate consort, Desire; though stricken in years, and given to wordy strife, yet is she the lawful partner of my bosom, and the mother of a numerous offspring."

"She shall not want. This is an asylum for distressed husbands. Your men, who have not force enough to command at home, come to my ship as to a city of refuge. You will make the seventh who has found peace by fleeing to this sanctuary. Their families are supported by ways best known to ourselves, and all parties are content. This is not the least of my benevolent acts."

"It is praiseworthy and just, honorable Captain; and I hope that Desire and her offspring may not be forgotten. The laborer is surely worthy of his hire; and if, peradventure, I should toil in your behalf, through stress of compulsion, I hope the good woman and her young may fatten on your liberality."

"You have my word: they shall not be neglected."

"Perhaps, just gentleman, if an allotment should be made in advance from that stock of gold, the mind of my consort would be relieved, her inquiries after my fate not so searching, and her spirit less troubled. I have reason to understand the temper of Desire: and am well identified, that, while the prospect of want is before her eyes, there will be a clamor in Newport. Now that the Lord has graciously given me the hopes of a respite, there can be no sin in wishing to enjoy it in peace."

Although the Rover was far from believing, with his captive, that the tongue of Desire could disturb the harmony of his ship, he was in the humor to be indulgent. Touching the spring again, he took a handful of the gold, and extending it toward Homespun, demanded—

"Will you take the bounty and the oath? The money will then be your own."

"The Lord defend us from the evil one, and deliver us from all temptation!" ejaculated the tailor. "Heroic Rover, I have a dread of the law. Should any evil overcome you, in the shape of a king's cruiser, or a tempest cast you on the land, there might be danger in being contaminated too closely with your crew. Any little services which I may render, on complusion, will be overlooked, I humbly hope; and I trust to your magnanimity, honest and honorable commander, that the same will not be forgotten in the division of your upright earnings."

"This is but the spirit of cabbaging, a little distorted," muttered the Rover, as he turned lightly on his heel, and tapped the gong, with an impatience that sent the startling sounds through every cranny of the ship. Four or five heads were thrust in at the different doors of the cabin, and the voice of one was heard, desiring to know the wishes of their leader.

"Take him to his hammock," was the sudden order.

The goodman Homespun, who, from fright or policy, appeared to be utterly unable to move, was quickly lifted from his seat, and conveyed to the door which communicated with the quarter-deck.

"Pause," he exclaimed, to his unceremonious bearers, as they were about to transport him to the place designated by their Captain; "I have one word yet to say. Honest and loyal rebel, though I do not accept your service, neither do I refuse it in any unseemly and irreverent manner. It is a sore temptation, and I feel it at my fingers' ends. But a covenant may be made between us, by which neither party shall be a loser, and in which the law shall

find no displeasure. I would wish, mighty commodore, to carry an honest name to my grave, and I would also wish to live out the number of my days; for, after having passed with so much credit and unharmed, through five bloody and cruel wars——"

"Away with him!"

Homespun vanished, as if magic had been employed in transporting him, and the Rover was again left to himself. His meditations were not interrupted for a long time, by human footstep or voice. That breathing stillness, which unbending and stern discipline can alone impart, pervaded the ship. A landsman, seated in the cabin, might have fancied himself, although surrounded by a crew of lawless and violent men, in the solitude of a deserted church, so suppressed and deadened were even those sounds that were absolutely necessary. There were heard at times, it is true, the high and harsh notes of some reveler, who appeared to break forth in the strains of a sea song, which, as they issued from the depths of the vessel, and were not very musical in themselves, broke on the silence like the first discordant strains of a new practitioner on a bugle. But even these interruptions gradually grew less frequent, and finally became inaudible. At length the Rover heard a hand fumbling about the handle of the cabin door, and then his military friend once more made his appearance.

There was that in the step, the countenance, and the whole air of the General, which proclaimed that his recent service, if successful, had not been achieved without great personal hazard. The Rover, who had started from his seat the moment he saw who entered, instantly demanded his report.

"The white is so drunk that he cannot lie down without holding on to the mast; but the negro is either a cheat or his head is made of flint."

"I hope you have not too easily abandoned the design."

"I would as soon batter a mountain! My retreat was not made a minute too soon."

The Rover fastened his eyes on the General, in order to assure himself of the precise condition of his subaltern, and changed his purpose.

"It is well. We will now retire for the night."

The other carefully dressed his tall person, and brought his face in the direction of the little hatchway so often named. Then, by a sort of desperate effort, he essayed to march to the spot, with the customary military step. As one or two erratic movements, and crossings of the legs, were not commented on by the Captain, the worthy martinet descended the stairs, as he believed, with sufficient dignity, the moral man not being in the precise state which is the best adapted to discover any little blunders that might be made by his physical coadjutor. The Rover looked at his watch; and, after allowing sufficient time for the deliberate retreat of the Generrl, he stepped lightly on the stairs and descended also.

The lower apartments of the vessel, though less striking in their equipments than the upper cabin, were arranged with great attention to neatness and comfort. A few offices for the servants occupied the extreme after-part of the ship, communicating with the dining apartments of the secondary officers; or, as it was called in technical language, "the ward-room." On each side of this, again, there were state-rooms, an imposing name by which the dormitories of those who are entitled to the honors of the quarter-deck are called. Forward of the ward-room came the apartments of the minor officers; and, immediately in front of them, the corps of the individual who was called the General was lodged, forming, by their discipline, a barrier between the more lawless seamen and their superiors.

There was little departure, in this disposition of the accommodations, from the ordinary arrangements of vessels of war of the same description and force as the *Rover;* but Wilder had not failed to remark that the bulkheads which separated the cabins from the berth-deck, or the part occupied by the crew, were far stouter than common, and that a small howitzer was at hand, to be used, as a

physician might say, internally, should occasion require. The doors were of extraordinary strength, and the means of barricading them resembled more a preparation for battle than the usual securities against petty encroachments on private property. Muskets, blunderbusses, pistols, sabers, half-pikes, etc., were fixed to the beams and carlings, or were made to serve as ornaments against the bulkheads, in a profusion that plainly told they were there as much for use as for show. In short, to the eye of a seaman, the whole betrayed a state of things in which superiors felt that their whole security against the violence and insubordination of their inferiors depended on their influence and their ability to resist, united; and that the former had not deemed it prudent to neglect any of the precautions which might aid their comparatively less powerful physical force.

In the principal of the lower apartments, or the ward-room, the Rover found his newly-enlisted lieutenant apparently busy in studying the regulations of the service in which he had just embarked. Approaching the corner in which the latter had seated himself, the former said, in a frank, encouraging, and even confidential manner:

"I hope you find our laws sufficiently firm, Mr. Wilder?"

"Want of firmness is not their fault; if the same quality can always be observed in administering them, it is well," returned the other, rising to salute his superior. "I have never found such rigid rules, even in——"

"Even in what, sir?" demanded the Rover, perceiving that his companion hesitated.

"I was about to say, even in his Majesty's service," returned Wilder, slightly coloring. "I know not whether it may be a fault, or a recommendation, to have served in a king's ship."

"It is the latter; at least I, for one, should think so, since I learned my trade in the same service."

"In what ship?" eagerly interrupted Wilder.

"In many," was the cold reply. "But, speaking of rigid rules, you will soon perceive that, in a service where there are no courts on shore to protect us, nor any sister cruisers to look after our welfare, no small portion of power is necessarily vested in the commander. You will find my authority a good deal extended."

"A little unlimited," said Wilder, with a smile that might have passed for ironical.

"I hope you will have no occasion to say that it is arbitrarily executed," returned the *Rover*, without observing, or perhaps without letting it appear that he observed, the expression of his companion's countenance. "But your hour is come; you are at liberty to land."

The young man thanked him, with a courteous inclination of the head, and expressed his readiness to go. As they ascended the ladder into the upper cabin, the Captain expressed his regret that the hour, and the necessity of preserving the incognito of his ship, would not permit him to send an officer of his rank ashore in the manner he could wish.

"But there is the skiff in which you came off, still alongside, and your own two stout fellows will soon twitch you to yon point. Apropos of those two men, are they included in our arrangements?"

"They have never quitted me since my childhood, and could not wish to do it now."

"It is a singular tie that unites two men so oddly constituted to one so different by habits and education from themselves," returned the Rover, glancing his eye keenly at the other, and withdrawing it the instant that he perceived his interest in the answer was observed.

"It is," Wilder calmly replied; "but as we are all seamen, the difference is not so great as one would at first imagine. I will now join them, and would take an opportunity to let them know that they are to serve in future under your orders."

The Rover suffered him to leave the cabin, following to the quarter-deck, with a careless step, as if he had come abroad to breathe the open air of the night.

The weather had not changed, but it still continued dark, though mild. The

same stillness as before reigned on the decks of the ship, and nowhere, with a solitary exception, was a human form to be seen, amid the collection of dark objects that rose on the sight, all of which Wilder well understood to be necessary fixtures in the vessel. The exception was the same individual who had at first received our adventurer, and who still paced the quarter-deck, wrapped, as before, in a watch-coat. To this personage the youth now addressed himself, announcing his intention temporarily to quit the vessel. His communication was received with a respect that satisfied him that his new rank was already known, although, as it would seem, it was to be made to succumb to the superior authority of the Rover.

"You know, sir, that no one, of whatever station, can leave the ship at this hour, without an order from the Captain," was the steady reply.

"So I presume; but I have the order, and transmit it to you. I shall land in my own boat."

The other, seeing a figure within hearing, which he well knew to be that of his commander, waited an instant to ascertain if what he heard was true. Finding that no objection was made, he merely indicated the place where the other would find his boat.

"The men have left it!" exclaimed Wilder, stepping back in surprise, as he was about to descend the vessel's side.

"Have the rascals run?"

"Sir, they have not run; neither are they rascals. They are in this ship and must be found."

The other waited to witness the effect of these authoritative words, too, on the individual who still lingered in the shadow of a mast. As no answer was, however, given from that quarter, he saw the necessity of obedience. Intimating his intention to seek the men, he passed into the forward parts of the vessel, leaving Wilder, as he thought, in sole possession of the quarter-deck. The latter was, however, soon undeceived. The Rover, advancing carelessly to his side, made an allusion to the condition of his vessel, in order to divert the thoughts of his new lieutenant, who, by his hurried manner of pacing the deck, he saw was beginning to indulge in uneasy meditations.

"A charming sea-boat, Mr. Wilder," he continued, "and one that never throws a drop of spray abaft her mainmast. She is just the craft a seaman loves; easy on her rigging, and lively in a sea. I call her the *Dolphin*, from the manner in which she cuts the water; and, perhaps, because she has as many colors as that fish, you will say. Jack must have a name for his ship, you know, and I dislike your cut-throat appellations, 'Spitfires,' and 'Bloody-murders.'"

"You were fortunate in finding such a vessel. Was she built to your orders?"

"Few ships, under six hundred tons, sail from these colonies that are not built to serve my purposes," returned the Rover, with a smile, as if he would cheer his companion by displaying the mine of wealth that was opening to him, through the new connection he had made. "This vessel was originally built for his most faithful majesty; and, I believe, was either intended as a present or a scourge to the Algerines; but — but she has changed owners, as you see, and her fortune is a little altered; though how, or why, is a trifle with which we will not, just now, divert ourselves. I think she is all the better handled for the transfer. I have had her in port; she has undergone some improvements, and is now altogether suited to a running trade."

"You then venture, sometimes, inside the forts?"

"When you have leisure, my private journal may afford some interest," the other evasively replied. "I hope, Mr. Wilder, you find the vessel in such a state that a seaman need not blush for her?"

"Her beauty and neatness first caught my eye, and induced me to make closer inquiries into her character."

"You were quick in seeing that she was kept at a single anchor!" returned the other, laughing. "But I never risk anything without a reason; not even the loss of my ground tackle. It would be no great achievement for so warm a battery as this I carry to silence yonder apology

for a fort; but in doing it we might receive an unfortunate hit, and therefore, I keep ready for an instant departure."

"It must be a little awkward to fight in a war where one cannot lower his flag in any emergency," said Wilder, more like one who mused, than one who intended to express the opinion aloud.

"The bottom is always beneath us," was the laconic answer. "But to you I may say, that I am, on principle, tender on my spars. They are examined daily, like the heels of a racer, for it often happens that our valor must be well tempered by discretion."

"And how and where do you refit, when damaged in a gale, or in a fight?"

"Hum! We contrive to refit, sir, and to take the sea again in tolerable condition."

He stopped; and Wilder, perceiving that he was not yet deemed entitled to entire confidence, continued silent. In this pause the officer returned, followed by the black alone. A few words served to explain the condition of Fid. It was very apparent that the young man was not only disappointed, but that he was deeply mortified. The frank and ingenuous air, however, with which he turned to the Rover, to apologize for the dereliction of his follower, satisfied the latter that he was far from suspecting any improper agency in bringing about his awkward condition.

"You know the character of seamen too well, sir," he said, "to impute this oversight to my poor fellow as a heinous fault. A better sailor never lay on a yard, or stretched a ratlin, than Dick Fid; but I must allow that he carries the quality of good fellowship to excess."

"You are fortunate in having one fellow left you to pull the boat ashore," carelessly returned the other.

"I am more than equal to that little exertion myself; nor do I like to separate the men. With your permission, the black shall be berthed, too, in the ship to-night."

"As you please. Empty hammocks are not scarce among us, since the last brush."

Wilder then directed the negro to return to his messmate, and to watch over him so long as he should be unable to look after himself. The black, who was far from being as clear-headed as common, willingly complied.

The young man then took leave of his companions, and descended into the skiff. As he pulled, with vigorous arms, away from the dark ship, his eyes were cast upward with a seaman's pleasure on the order and neatness of her gear, and thence they fell on the frowning mass of the hull. A light-built, compact form was seen standing on the heel of the bowsprit, apparently watching his movements, and, notwithstanding the gloom of the clouded starlight, he was enabled to detect, in the individual who took so much apparent interest in his proceedings, the person of the Rover.

CHAPTER VIII.

"What is yon gentleman?
Nurse.—The son and heir of old Tiberio.
Juliet.—What's he that follows there, that would not dance?
Nurse.—Marry, I know not."—ROMEO AND JULIET.

THE sun was just heaving up out of the field of waters in which the blue islands of Massachusetts lie, when the inhabitants of Newport were seen opening their doors and windows, and preparing for the different employments of the day, with the freshness and alacrity of people who had wisely adhered to the natural allotments of time in seeking their rests, or in pursuing their pleasures. The morning salutations passed cheerfully from one to another as each undid the slight fastenings of his shop; and many a kind inquiry passed from one to the other concerning a daughter's fever, or the rheumatism of some aged grandma. As the landlord of the "Foul Anchor" was so wary in protecting the character of his house from any unjust imputations of unseemly reveling, so was he among the foremost in opening his doors, to catch any transient customer who might feel the necessity of washing away the damps of the past night with an invigorating stomachic. This cordial was then very generally taken, in the British

provinces, under the various names of "bitters," "juleps," "morning drams," "fogmatics," etc., as the situation of different districts appeared to require particular preventives. The custom is getting a little into disuse, it is true; but still it retains much of that sacred character which is the consequence of antiquity. It is not a little extraordinary that this venerable and laudable practice of washing away the unwholesome impurities engendered in the human system, at a time, when, as it is entirely without any moral protector, it is left exposed to the attacks of all the evils to which flesh is heir, should subject the American to the witticisms of his European brother.

We are not among the least grateful to those foreign philanthropists who take so deep an interest in our welfare as seldom to let any republican foible pass without applying to it, as it merits, the caustic application of their purifying monarchial pens. We are, perhaps, the more sensible of this generosity, because we have had occasion to witness, that, so great is their zeal in behalf of our infant states (robust and a little unmanageable, perhaps, but still infant), they are wont, in the warmth of their ardor to reform cisatlantic sins, to overlook some of their own backslidings. Numberless are the moral missionaries that the mother-country, for instance, has sent among us, on these pious and benevolent errands. We can only regret that their efforts have been crowned with so little success. It was our fortune to be familiarly acquainted with one of these worthies, who never lost an opportunity of declaiming, above all, against the infamy of the particular practice to which we have thus alluded. The ground he took was so broad that he held it to be not only immoral, but, what was hideous, it was ungenteel, to swallow anything stronger than small beer before the hour allotted to dinner. After that important period, it was not only permitted to assuage the previous mortifications of the flesh, but, so liberal did he show himself in the indulgence, after the clock had settled the point of orthodoxy, that he was regularly carried to bed at midnight, from which he as regularly issued in the course of the following morning, to discourse again on the deformities of premature drunkenness. And here we would take occasion to say, that, as to our own insignificant person, we eschew the abomination altogether; and only regret that those of the two nations, who find pleasure in the practice, could not come to some amicable uuderstanding as to the precise period in the twenty-four hours when it is permitted to such Christian gentlemen as speak English to steep their senses in liquor, without bringing scandal on good breeding.

That the negotiators who formed the last treaty of amity should have overlooked this important moral topic is another evidence that both parties were so tired of an unprofitable war as to patch up a peace in a hurry. It is not too late to name a commission for this purpose; and, in order that the question may be fairly treated on its merits, we presume to suggest to the Executive the propriety of nominating, as our commissioner, some confirmed advocate of the system of "juleps." It is believed our worthy and indulgent mother can have no difficulty in selecting a suitable coadjutor from the ranks of her numerous and well-trained diplomatic corps.

With this manifestation of our personal liberality, united with so much interest in the proper, and we hope final disposition of this important question, we may be permitted to resume the narrative, without being set down as advocates for morning stimulants or evening intoxication; which is a very just division of the whole subject, as we believe from an observation that is far from being limited.

The landlord of the "Foul Anchor," as has just been said, was early a-foot, to gain an honest penny from any of the supporters of the former system who might chance to select his bar for their morning sacrifices to Bacchus, in preference to that of his neighbor, he who endeavored to entice the lieges by exhibiting a red-faced man in a scarlet coat, that was called the "Head of George the Second." The activity of the alert publican did not go without its

reward. The tide of custom set strongly for the first half-hour toward the haven of his hospitable bar; nor did he appear entirely to abandon the hopes of a farther influx, even after the usual period of such arrivals began to pass away. Finding, however, that his customers were beginning to depart on their several pursuits, he left his station, and appeared at the outer door, with a hand in each pocket, as if he found a secret pleasure in the jingling of their new tenants. A stranger, who had not entered with the others, and who, of course, had not partaken of the customary libations, was standing at a little distance, with a hand thrust into the bosom of his vest, apparently more occupied with his own reflections than with the success of the publican.

This figure caught the understanding eye of the latter, who conceived that no man, who had recourse to the proper morning stimulants, could wear so meditative a face at that early period in the cares of the day, and that, consequently, something was yet to be gained by opening a communication between them.

"A clean air this, friend, to brush away the damps of the night," he said, snuffing the really delicious and invigorating breathings of a fine October morning. "It is such purifiers as this that give our island its character, and make it, perhaps, the very healthiest, as it is universally admitted to be the beautifulest spot in creation. A stranger here, 'tis likely?"

"But quite lately arrived, sir," was the reply.

"A seafaring man, by your dress? and one in search of a vessel, as I am ready to qualify to?" continued the publican, chuckling at his own penetration. "We have many such that pass hereaway; but people mustn't think because Newport is so flourishing, that berths can always be had for asking. Have you tried your luck in the capital of the Bay province?"

"I left Boston no later than the day before yesterday."

"What! couldn't the proud townsfolk find you a ship? Aye, they are a mighty people at talking, and it isn't often that they put their candle under the bushel; and yet there are what I call good judges, who think Narragansett Bay is in a fair way, shortly, to count as many sail as Massachusetts. Yonder is a wholesome brig, that is going, within the week, to turn her horses into rum and sugar; and here is a ship that hauled into the stream no longer ago than yesterday sun-down. That is a noble vessel, and her cabins are fit for a prince! She'll be off with the change of the wind; and I dare say a good hand wouldn't go a-begging aboard her just now. Then, there is a slaver, off the fort, if you would like a cargo of woolheads for your money."

"Is it thought the ship in the inner harbor will sail with the first wind?" demanded the stranger.

"It is downright. My wife is a full cousin to the wife of the collector's clerk; and I have it quite straight that the papers are ready, and that nothing but the wind detains them. I keep some short scores, you know, friend, with the bluejackets, and it behooves an honest man to look to his interests in these hard times. Yes, there she lies; a well-known ship, the *Royal Caroline*. She makes a regular v'yage once a year between the provinces and Bristol, touching here out and home to give us certain supplies, and to wood and water; and then she goes home, or to the Carolinas, as the case may be."

"Pray, sir, has she much of an armament?" continued the stranger, who began to lose his thoughtful air, in the more evident interest he was beginning to take in the discourse.

"Yes, yes; she is not without a few bull-dogs to bark in defense of her own rights, and to say a word in support of his Majesty's honor, too, God bless him! Judy! you Jude!" he shouted, at the top of his voice, to a negro girl who was gathering kindling-wood among the chips of a ship-yard, "scamper over to neighbor Homespun's, and rattle away at his bedroom windows; the man has overslept himself: it is not common to hear seven o'clock strike, and the thirsty tailor did not appear for his bitters."

A short cessation took place in the dialogue, while the wench was executing her

master's orders. The summons produced no other effect than to draw a shrill reply from Desire, whose voice penetrated through the thin board coverings of the little dwelling, as readily as sound would be conveyed through a sieve. In another moment a window was opened, and the worthy housewife thrust her disturbed visage into the fresh air of the morning.

"What next! what next!" demanded the offended, and, as she was fain to believe, neglected wife, under the impression that it was her truant husband making a tardy return to his domestic allegiance, who had thus presumed to disturb her slumbers. "Is it not enough that you have eloped from my bed and board, for a whole night, but you must break in on the natural rest of a whole family, seven blessed children, without counting their mother? O, Hector! Hector! an example are you getting to be to the young and giddy, and a warning will you yet prove to the unthoughtful!"

"Bring hither the black book," said the publican to his wife, who had been drawn to a window by the lamentations of Desire; "I think the woman said something about starting on a journey between two days; if such has been the philosophy of the good man, it behooves honest people to look into their accounts. Aye, as I live, Keziah, you have let the limping beggar get seventeen and sixpence into arrears, and that for such trifles as morning-drams and nightcaps!"

"You are wrathy, friend, without reason; the man has made a garment for the boy at school, and found the——"

"Hush, good woman," interrupted her husband, returning to the book, and making a sign for her to retire; "I dare say it will all come round in proper time, and the less noise we make about the backslidings of a neighbor the less will be said of our transgressions. A worthy and hard-working mechanic, sir," he continued, addressing the stranger; "but a man who could never get the sun to shine in at his windows, though, Heaven knows, the glass is none too thick for such a blessing."

"And do you imagine, on evidence as slight as this we have seen, that such a man has actually absconded?"

"Why, it is a calamity that has befallen his betters!" returned the publican, interlocking his fingers across the rotundity of his person, with an air of grave consideration. "We innkeepers, who live as it were in plain sight of every man's secrets —for it is after a visit to us that one is most apt to open his heart—should know something of the affairs of a neighborhood. If the goodman Homespun could smooth down the temper of his companion as easily as he lays a seam in its place, the thing might not occur, but—Do you drink this morning, sir?"

"A drop of your best."

"As I was saying," continued the other, furnishing his customer according to his desire, "if a tailor's goose would take the wrinkles out of the ruffled temper of a woman, as it does out of the cloth, and then, if after it had done this task, a man might eat it, as he would yonder bird hanging behind my bar—— Perhaps you will have occasion to make your dinner with us, too, sir?"

"I cannot say I shall not," returned the stranger, paying for the dram he had barely tasted; "it greatly depends on the result of my inquiries concerning the different vessels in the port."

"Then would I, though perfectly disinterested, as you know, sir, recommend you to make this house your home, while you sojourn in the town. It is the resort of most of the seafaring men; and I may say this much of myself, without conceit —no man can tell you more of what you want to know than the landlord of the 'Foul Anchor.'"

"You advise an application to the commander of this vessel in the stream, for a berth; will she sail so soon as you have named?"

"With the first wind. I know the whole history of the ship, from the day they laid the blocks for her keel, to the minute when she let her anchor where you now see her. The great southern heiress, General Grayson's fine daughter, is to be a passenger; she, and her over-looker, government-lady, I believe they call her—

a Wyllys—are waiting for the signal, up here, at the residence of Madame De Lacey; she that is the relict of the rear-admiral of that name, who is full sister to the general, and therefore an aunt to the young lady, according to my reckoning. Many people think the two fortunes will go together, in which case he will be not only a lucky man but a rich one who gets Miss Getty Grayson for a wife."

The stranger, who had maintained rather an indifferent manner during the close of the foregoing dialogue, appeared now disposed to enter into it, with a degree of interest suited to the sex and condition of the present subject of their discourse. After waiting to catch the last syllable that the publican chose to expend his breath on, he demanded, a little abruptly:

"And you say the house near us, on the rising ground, is the residence of Mrs. De Lacey?"

"If I did, I know nothing of the matter. By 'up here,' I mean half a mile off. It is a place fit for a lady of her quality, and none of your elbowy dwellings, like these crowded about us. One may easily tell the house, by its pretty blinds and its shades. I'll engage there are no such shades in all Europe, as the very pretty trees that stand behind the door of Madam De Lacey."

"It is very probable," muttered the stranger, who, not appearing quite as sensitive in his provincial admiration as the publican, had already relapsed into his former musing air. Instead of pushing the discourse, he suddenly turned the subject, by making some commonplace remark; and then, repeating the probability of his being obliged to return, he walked deliberately away, taking the direction of the residence of Mrs. De Lacey. The observing publican would probably have found sufficient matter for observation in this abrupt termination of the interview, had not Desire, at that precise moment, broken out of her habitation, and diverted his attention, by the peculiarly lively manner in which she delineated the character of her delinquent husband.

The reader has probably, ere this, suspected that the individual who had conferred with the publican, as a stranger, was not unknown to himself. It was, in truth, no other than Wilder. But in the completion of his own secret purposes, the young mariner left the wordy war in his rear; and turning up the gentle ascent, against the side of which the town is built, he proceeded toward the suburbs.

It was not difficult to distinguish the house he sought among a dozen other similar retreats, by its "shades," as the innkeeper, in conformity with a provincial use of the word, had termed a few really noble elms that grew in the little court before its door. In order, however, to assure himself that he was right, he confirmed his surmises by actual inquiry, and continued thoughtfully on his path.

The morning had, by this time, fairly opened, with every appearance of another of those fine, bland, autumnal days for which the climate is, or ought to be, so distinguished. The little air there was came from the south, fanning the face of our adventurer, as he occasionally paused in his ascent, to gaze at the different vessels in the harbor, like a mild breeze in June. In short, it was just such a time as one who is fond of strolling in the fields is apt to seize on with rapture, and which a seaman sets down as a day lost in his reckoning.

Wilder was first drawn from his musings by the sound of a dialogue that came from persons who were evidently approaching. There was one voice, in particular, that caused his blood to thrill, he knew not why, and which appeared, unaccountably even to himself, to set in motion every latent faculty of his system. Profiting by the formation of the ground, he sprang unseen up a little bank, and approaching an angle in a low wall, he found himself in the immediate proximity of the speakers.

The wall inclosed the garden and pleasure grounds of a mansion, that he now perceived was the residence of Mrs. De Lacey. A rustic summer-house, which in the proper season had been nearly buried in leaves and flowers, stood at no great distance from the road. By its elevation

and position it commanded a view of the town, the harbor, the isles of Massachusetts to the east, those of the Providence Plantations on the west, and to the south an illimitable expanse of ocean. As it had now lost its leafy covering, there was no difficulty in looking directly into its center, through the rude pillars which supported its little dome. Here Wilder discovered the very party of whose conversation he had been a listener the previous day while caged with the Rover in the loft of the ruin. Though the Admiral's widow and Mrs. Wyllys were most in advance, evidently addressing some one who, like himself, was in the public road, the young sailor soon detected the more enticing person of the blooming Gertrude in the background. His observations, were, however, interrupted by a reply from the individual who as yet was unseen. Directed by the voice, Wilder was soon enabled to perceive the person of a man in green old age, who, seated on a stone by the wayside, appeared to be resting his weary limbs, while he answered certain interrogations that were made from the summer-house. His head was white, and the hand which grasped a walking staff sometimes trembled; but there was that in the costume, the manner, and the voice of the speaker, which furnished sufficient evidence of his having once been a veteran of the sea.

"Lord! your ladyship, ma'am," he said, in tones that were getting tremulous, even while they retained the deep intonations of his profession, "we old sea-dogs never stop to look into an almanac to see which way the wind will come after the next thaw before we put to sea. It is enough for us that the sailing orders are aboard, and that the captain has taken leave of his lady."

"Ah! the very words of the poor lamented Admiral!" exclaimed Mrs. De Lacey, who had great satisfaction in pursuing the discourse with a superannuated mariner. "And then you are of opinion, honest friend, that when a ship is ready, she should sail, whether the wind is——"

"Here is another follower of the sea, opportunely come to lend us his advice," interrupted Gertrude, with a hurried air, as if to divert the attention of her aunt from something like a very dogmatical termination of an argument that had just occurred between her and Mrs. Wyllys; "perhaps he may serve as an umpire."

"True," said the latter. "Pray, what do *you* think of the weather to-day, sir? would it be profitable to sail in such a time, or not?"

The young mariner reluctantly withdrew his eyes from the blushing Gertrude, who, in her eagerness to point him out, had advanced to the front, and was now shrinking back timidly, to the center of the building again, like one who had already repented of her temerity. He then fastened his look on her who put the question; and so long and riveted was his gaze that she saw fit to repeat it, believing that what she had first said was not properly understood.

"There is little faith to be put in the weather, madam," was the dilatory reply. "A man has followed the sea to little purpose who is tardy in making that discovery."

There was something so sweet and gentle, at the same time that it was manly, in the voice of Wilder, that the ladies, by a common impulse, were won to listen. The neatness of his attire, which, while it was strictly professional, was worn with an air of smartness, and even of gentility, that rendered it difficult to suppose that he was not entitled to lay claim to a higher station in society than that in which he actually appeared, aided him also in producing a favorable impression. Bending her head with a manner that was intended to be polite, a little more perhaps in self-respect than out of consideration to the other, Mrs. De Lacey resumed the discourse.

"These ladies," she said, "are about to embark in yonder ship for the province of Carolina, and we were consulting about the quarter in which the wind will probably blow next. But in such a vessel, it cannot matter much, I should think, sir, whether the wind be fair or foul."

"I think not," was the reply. "She

looks to me like a ship that will not do much, let the wind be as it may."

"She has the reputation of being a very fast sailer. Reputation! We know she is such, having come from home to the colonies in the incredibly short passage of seven weeks! But seamen have their favorites and prejudices, I believe, like us poor mortals ashore. You will, therefore, excuse me, if I ask this honest veteran for an opinion on this particular point also. What do you imagine, friend, to be the sailing qualities of yonder ship—she with the peculiarly high top-gallant booms, and such conspicuous round tops?"

A smile struggled on the lip of Wilder, but he continued silent. On the other hand, the old mariner arose, appearing to examine the ship like one who perfectly comprehended the somewhat untechnical language of the Admiral's widow.

"The ship in the inner harbor, your ladyship," he answered, when the examination was finished, "which is, I suppose, the vessel that madam means, is just such a ship as does a sailor's eye good to look at. A gallant and a safe boat she is, as I will swear; and, as to sailing, though she may not be altogether a witch, yet she is a fast craft, or I'm no judge of blue water, or those that live on it."

"Here is at once an extraordinary difference of opinion!" exclaimed Mrs. De Lacey. "I am glad, however, you pronounce her safe; for, although seamen love a fast sailing vessel, these ladies will not like her the less for the security. I presume, sir, you will not dispute her being *safe?*"

"The very quality I should most deny," was the laconic answer of Wilder.

"It is very remarkable! This is a veteran seaman, sir, and he appears to think differently."

"He may have seen more, in his time, than myself, madam; but I doubt whether he can just now see as well. This is a great distance to discover the merits or demerits of a ship; I have been nigher."

"Then you really think there is danger to be apprehended, sir?" demanded the soft voice of Gertrude, whose fears had gotten the better of her diffidence.

"I do. Had I mother or sister," touching his hat, and bowing to his fair interrogator, as he uttered the last word with emphasis, "I would hesitate to let her embark in that ship. On my honor, ladies, I do assure you that I think this very vessel in more danger than any ship which has left, or probably will leave, a port in the provinces this autumn."

"This is extraordinary!" observed Mrs. Wyllys. "It is not the character we have received of the vessel, which has been greatly exaggerated, or she is entitled to be considered as uncommonly convenient and safe. May I ask, sir, on what circumstances you have founded this opinion?"

"They are sufficiently plain. She is too lean in the harping and too full in the counter to steer. Then she is as wall-sided as a church, and stows too much above the water-line. Besides this, she carries no headsail, but all the press upon her will be aft, which will jam her into the wind, and, more than likely, throw her aback. The day will come when that ship will go down stern foremost."

His auditors listened to this opinion, which Wilder delivered in an oracular and very decided manner, with that sort of secret faith and humble dependence, which the uninstructed are very apt to lend to those who are initiated in the mysteries of any imposing profession. Neither of them had certainly a very clear perception of his meaning; but there were danger and death in his very words. Mrs. De Lacey felt it incumbent on her own particular advantages, however, to manifest how well she comprehended the subject.

"These are certainly very serious evils!" she gravely rejoined. "It is quite unaccountable that my agent should have neglected to mention them. Is there any other quality, sir, that strikes your eye at this distance, and which you deem alarming?"

"Too many. You observe that her top-gallant masts are fidded abaft; none of her lofty sails set flying; and then, madam, she has depended on bobstays and gammoning for the security of that

very important part of a vessel, the bowsprit."

"Too true! too true!" said Mrs. De Lacey, with a start of professional horror. "These things had altogether escaped me; but I see them all plain enough now they are mentioned. Such neglect is highly culpable; more especially to rely on bobstays and gammonings for the security of a bowsprit! Really, Wyllys, I can never consent that my niece should embark in such a vessel."

The calm eye of Wyllys had been fastened on the countenance of Wilder while he was speaking, and she now turned it with undisturbed serenity on the Admiral's widow.

"Perhaps the danger has been a little magnified," she observed. "Let us inquire of this other seaman what he thinks on these points. And do you see all these serious dangers to be apprehended, friend, in trusting ourselves, at this season of the year, in a passage to the Carolinas, aboard of yonder ship?"

"Lord, madam!" said the gray-headed mariner, with a chuckling laugh, "these are new-fashioned faults and difficulties, if they be faults and difficulties at all! In my time, such matters were never heard of; and I confess I am so stupid as not to understand half the young gentleman has been saying."

"It is some time, I fancy, since you were last at sea," Wilder coolly observed.

"Some five or six years since the last time, and fifty since the first."

"Then you do not see the same causes for apprehension?" Mrs. Wyllys once more demanded.

"Old and worn out as I am, lady, if her captain will give me a berth aboard her, I will thank him for the same as a favor."

"Misery seeks any relief," whispered Mrs. De Lacey, bestowing on her companions a significant glance, that paid no great compliment to the old man's motives. "I incline to the opinion of the younger seaman; he supports it with substantial, professional reasons."

Mrs. Wyllys suspended her questions just as long as complaisance to the last speaker seemed to require; and then she resumed them as follows, addressing her next inquiry to Wilder:

"And how do you explain this difference in judgment between two men who ought both to be so well qualified to decide correctly?"

"I believe there is a well-known proverb which will answer that question," returned the young man, smiling: "but some allowance must be made for the improvements in ships; and, perhaps, some little deference to the stations we have respectively filled on board them."

"Both very true. Still, one would think the changes of half a dozen years cannot be so very considerable, in a profession that is so exceedingly ancient."

"Your pardon, madam: they require constant practice to be known. Now, I dare say that yonder worthy old tar is ignorant of the manner in which a ship, when pressed by her canvas, is made 'to cut the waves with her taffrail.'"

"Impossible!" cried the Admiral's widow; "the youngest and the meanest mariner must have been struck with the beauty of such a spectacle."

"Yes, yes," returned the old tar, who wore the air of an offended man, and who, probably, had he been ignorant of any part of his art, was not just then in the temper to confess it; "many is the proud ship that I have seen doing the very same; and, as the lady says, a grand and comely sight it is!"

Wilder was confounded. He bit his lips, like one who was overreached by either excessive ignorance or exceeding cunning; but the self-complacency of Mrs. De Lacey spared him the necessity of an immediate reply.

"It would have been an extraordinary circumstance, truly," she said, "that a man should have grown white-headed on the seas, and never have been struck with so noble a spectacle. But, then, my honest tar, you appear to be wrong in overlooking the striking faults in yonder ship, which this—a—a—this gentleman has just, and so properly, named."

"I do not call them faults, your ladyship. Such is the way my late brave and

excellent commander always had his own ship rigged; and I am bold to say that a better seaman, or a more honest man, never served in his Majesty's fleet."

"And you have served the King! How was your beloved commander named?"

"How should he be? By us, who knew him well, he was called Fair-weather; for it was always smooth water, and prosperous times, under his orders; though on shore, he was known as the gallant and victorious Rear-Admiral De Lacey."

"And did my late revered and skillful husband cause his ship to be rigged in this manner?" said the widow, with a tremor in her voice that bespoke how much, and how truly, she was overcome by surprise and gratified pride.

The aged tar lifted his bending frame from the stone, gazed wistfully at the relict of him he had just named, and bowing low, he answered:

"If I have the honor of seeing my Admiral's lady, it will prove a joyful sight to my old eyes! Sixteen years did I serve in his own ship, and five more in the same squadron. I dare say your ladyship may have heard him speak of the captain of the main-top, Bob Blunt?"

"I dare say—I dare say. He loved to talk of those who served him faithfully."

"Aye, God bless him, and make his memory glorious! He was a kind officer, and one who never forgot a friend, whether his duty kept him on a yard or in the cabin. He was the sailor's friend, that very same Admiral!"

"This is a grateful man!" said Mrs. De Lacey, wiping her eyes, "and I dare say a most competent judge of a vessel. And are you quite sure, worthy friend, that my late revered husband had all his ships arranged like the one of which we have been talking?"

"Very sure, madam; for with my own hands did I assist to rig them."

"Even to the bobstays?"

"And the gammonings, my lady. Were the Admiral alive and here, he would call yon 'a safe and well-fitted ship,' as I am ready to swear."

Mrs. De Lacey turned, with an air of great dignity and entire decision, to Wilder, as she continued:

"I have, then, made a small mistake in memory, which is not surprising, when one recollects that he who taught me so much of the profession is no longer here to continue his lessons. We are much obliged to you, sir, for your opinion, but we must think that you have overrated the danger."

"On my honor, madam," interrupted Wilder, laying his hand on his heart, and speaking with singular emphasis, "I am sincere in what I say. I do affirm that I believe there will be great danger in embarking in yonder ship; and I call Heaven to witness, that in so saying I am actuated by no malice to her commander, her owners, or any connected with her."

"We dare say, sir, you are very sincere. We only think you are in error," returned the Admiral's widow, with a commiserating, and what she intended for a condescending, smile. "We are your debtors for your good intentions, at least. Come, worthy veteran, we must not part here. You will gain admission by knocking at my door; and we shall talk further of these matters."

Then, bowing coolly to Wilder, she led the way up the garden, followed by all her companions. The step of Mrs. De Lacey was proud, like the tread of one conscious of all her advantages; while that of Wyllys was slow, as if she were buried in thought. Gertrude kept close to the side of the latter, her face hid beneath the shade of a gypsy hat. Wilder fancied that he could discover the stolen and anxious glance that she threw back toward one who had excited a decided emotion in her sensitive bosom, though it was a feeling no more attractive than alarm. He lingered until they were lost amid the shrubbery. Then, turning to pour out his disappointment on his brother tar, he found that the old man had made such good use of his time, as to be already within the gate, most probably felicitating himself on the prospect of reaping the reward of his recent adulation.

CHAPTER IX.

"He ran this way, and leaped this orchard wall."
—SHAKESPEARE.

WILDER retired from the field like a defeated man. Accident, or as he was willing to term it, the sycophancy of the old mariner, had counteracted his own little artifice; and he was now left without the remotest chance of being again favored with such another opportunity of effecting his purpose. We shall not, at this period of the narrative, enter into a detail of the feelings and policy which induced our adventurer to plot against the apparent interests of those with whom he had so recently associated himself; it is enough for our present object, that the facts themselves should be distinctly set before the reader.

The return of the disappointed young sailor toward the town was moody and slow. More than once he stopped short in the descent, and fastened his eyes, for minutes together, on the different vessels in the harbor. But in these frequent halts, no evidence of the particular interest he took in any one of the ships escaped him. Perhaps his gaze at the southern trader was longer and more earnest than at any other; though his eye, at times, wandered curiously, and even anxiously, over every craft that lay within the shelter of the haven.

The customary hour for exertion had now arrived, and the sounds of labor were beginning to be heard, issuing from every quarter of the place. The songs of the mariners were rising on the calm of the morning, with their peculiar, long-drawn intonations. The ship in the inner harbor was among the first to furnish this proof of the industry of her people, and of her approaching departure. It was only as these movements caught his eye, that Wilder seemed to be thoroughly awakened from his abstraction, and to pursue his observations with an undivided mind. He saw the seamen ascend the rigging, in that lazy manner which is so strongly contrasted by their activity in moments of need; and here and there a human form was showing itself on the black and ponderous yards. In a few moments, the foretop-sail fell from its compact compass on the yard into graceful and careless festoons. This, the attentive Wilder well knew, was, among all trading vessels, the signal of sailing. In a few more minutes, the lower angles of this important sail were drawn to the extremities of the corresponding spar beneath, and then the heavy yard was seen slowly ascending the mast, dragging after it the opening folds of the sail, until the latter was tightened at all its edges, displaying itself in one broad, snow-white sheet of canvas. Against this wide surface the light currents of air fell, and as often receded; the sail bellying and collapsing in a manner to show that, as yet, they were powerless. At this point the preparations appeared suspended, as if the mariners, having thus invited the breeze, were awaiting to see if their invocation was likely to be attended with success.

It was a natural transition for him, who so closely observed these indications of departure in the ship so often named, to turn his eyes on the vessel which lay without the fort, in order to witness the effect so manifest a signal had produced in her also. But the closest and the keenest scrutiny could detect no sign of any bond of interest between the two. While the former was making the movements just described, the latter lay at her anchors, without the smallest proof that man existed within the mass of her black and inanimate hull. So quiet and motionless did she seem, that one who had never been instructed in the matter, might readily have believed her a fixture in the sea, some symmetrical and enormous excrescence thrown up by the waves, with its mazes of lines and pointed fingers, or one of those fantastic monsters that are believed to exist in the bottom of the ocean, darkened by the fogs and tempests of ages.

To the understanding of Wilder, however, she exhibited a very different spectacle. He easily saw, through all this apparently drowsy quietude, those signs of readiness which none but a seaman could discover. The cable, instead of

stretching in a long, declining line toward the water, was "short," or nearly "up and down," as it is equally termed in technical language, just "scope" enough being allowed out board to resist the power of the lively tide that acted on the deep keel of the vessel. All her boats were in the water, so disposed and prepared as to convince him they were in a state to be employed in towing in the shortest possible time.

Not a sail or a yard was out of its place, undergoing those repairs and examinations which the mariner is wont to make, when lying within the security of a suitable haven; nor was there a single rope wanting, amid the hundreds which interlaced the blue sky that formed the background of the picture, that might be necessary in bringing every art of facilitating motion into use. In short, the vessel, while seeming least prepared, was most in a condition to move, or, if necessary, to resort to her means of offense and defense. Th eboarding-nettings, it is true, were triced to the rigging, as on the previous day; but a sufficient apology was to be found for this act of extreme caution, in the war which exposed her to the attacks from the light French cruisers that so often ranged from the islands of the West Indies, along the whole coast of the continent, and in the position the ship had taken, without the ordinary defenses of the harbor. In this state, the vessel, to one who knew her character, appeared like some beast of prey, or venomous reptile, that lay in an assumed lethargy, to delude the unconscious victim within the limits of its leap, or nigh enough to receive the deadly blow of its fangs.

Wilder shook his head, in a manner which said plainly enough how well he understood this treacherous tranquillity, and continued his walk toward the town with the same deliberate step as before. He had whiled away many minutes unconsciously, and would probably have lost the reckoning of as many more, had not his attention been suddenly diverted by a slight touch on the shoulder. Starting at this unexpected diversion, he turned, and saw that, in his dilatory progress, he had been overtaken by the seaman whom he had last met in that very society in which he would have given so much to have been included himself.

"Your young limbs should carry you ahead, master," said the latter, when he had succeeded in attracting the attention of Wilder, "like a 'Mudian going with a clean full; and yet I have forereached upon you with my old legs, in such a manner as to bring us again within hail."

"Perhaps you enjoy the extraordinary advantage of 'cutting the waves with your taffrail,'" returned Wilder, with a sneer. "There can be no accounting for the headway one makes, when sailing in that remarkable manner."

"I see, brother, you are offended that I followed your motions; though, in so doing, I did no more than obey a signal of your own setting. Did you expect an old sea-dog like me, who has stood his watch so long in a flagship, to confess ignorance in any matter that of right belongs to blue water? How the devil was I to know that there is not some sort of craft, among the thousands that are getting into fashion, which sails best stern foremost? They say a ship is modeled from a fish; and, if such be the case, it is only to make one after the fashion of a crab, or an oyster, to have the very thing you named."

"It is well, old man. You have your reward, I suppose, in a handsome present from the Admiral's widow, and you may now lie by for a season, without caring much as to the manner in which they build their ships in future. Pray, do you intend to shape your course much further down this hill?"

"Until I get to the bottom."

"I am glad of it, for it is my especial intention to go up it again. As we say at sea, when our conversation is ended, 'A good time to you!'"

The old seaman laughed, when he saw the young man turn abruptly on his heel, and begin to retrace the very ground along which he had just before descended.

"Ah! you have never sailed with a rear-admiral," he said, continuing his own

course in the former direction, and picking his way with a care suited to his age and infirmities. "No, there is no getting the finish, even at sea, without a cruise or two under a flag, and that at the mizzen, too!"

"Intolerable old hypocrite!" muttered Wilder, between his teeth. "The rascal has seen better days, and is now perverting his knowledge to juggle a foolish woman. I am well quit of the knave, who, I dare say, has adopted lying for his trade, now labor is unproductive. I will go back. The coast is quite clear, and who can say what may happen next?"

Most of the foregoing paragraph was actually uttered in the suppressed manner already described, while the rest was merely meditated, which, considering the fact that our adventurer had no auditor, was quite as well as if he had spoken it through a trumpet. The expectation thus vaguely expressed, however, was not likely to be soon realized. Wilder sauntered up the hill, endeavoring to assume the unconcerned air of an idler, if by chance his return should excite attention; but though he lingered long in open view of the windows of Mrs. De Lacey's villa, he was not able to catch another glimpse of its tenants. There were very evident symptoms of the approaching journey, in the trunks and packages that left the building for the town, and in the hurried and busy manner of the few servants that he occasionally saw; but it would seem that the principal personages of the establishment had withdrawn into the secret recesses of the building, probably for the very natural purpose of confidential communion and affectionate leave-taking. He was turning, vexed and disappointed, from his anxious and fruitless watch, when he once more heard female voices on the inner side of the low wall against which he had been leaning. The sounds approached; nor was it long before his quick ears again recognized the musical voice of Gertrude.

"It is tormenting ourselves without sufficient reason, my dear madam," she said, as the speaker drew sufficiently nigh to be distinctly overheard, "to allow anything that may have fallen from such a—such an individual, to make the slighest impression."

"I feel the justice of what you say, my love," returned the mournful voice of her governess, "and yet I am so weak as to be unable entirely to shake off a sort of superstitious feeling on this subject. Gertrude, would you not wish to see that youth again?"

"Me, madam!" exclaimed her *eleve*, in a sort of alarm. "Why should you, or I, wish to see an utter stranger again? and one so low—not low, perhaps—but one who is surely not altogether a very suitable companion for——"

"Well-born ladies, you would say. Why do you imagine the young man to be so much our inferior?"

Wilder thought there was a melody in the intonations of the youthful voice of the maiden, which in some measure excused the personality, as she answered—

"I am certainly not so fastidious in my notions of birth and station as Aunt De Lacey," she said, laughingly; "but I should forget some of your own instructions, dear Mrs. Wyllys, did I not feel that education and manners make a sensible difference in the opinions and characters of all us poor mortals."

"Very true, my child. But I confess I saw or heard nothing that induces me to believe the young man of whom we are speaking either uneducated or vulgar. On the contrary, his language and pronunciation were those of a gentleman, and his air was quite suited to his utterance. He had the frank and simple manner of his profession; but you are not now to learn that youths of the first families in the provinces, or even in the kingdom, are often placed in the service of the marine."

"But they are officers, dear madam; this—this individual wore the dress of a common mariner."

"Not altogether. It was finer in its quality, and more tasteful in its fashion than is customary. I have known admirals do the same in their moments of relaxation. Sailors of condition often love to carry about them the testimonials of their profession, without any of the trappings of their rank."

"You then think he was an officer—perhaps in the King's service."

"He might well have been so, though the fact that there is no cruiser in the port would seem to contradict it. But it was not so trifling a circumstance that awakened the unaccountable interest that I feel. Gertrude, my love, it was my fortune to have been much with seamen in early life. I seldom see one of that age, and of that spirited and manly mien, without feeling emotion. But I tire you; let us talk of other things."

"Not in the least, dear madam," Gertrude hurriedly interrupted. "Since you think the stranger a gentleman, there can be no harm—that is, it is not quite so improper, I believe—to speak of him. Can there, then, be the danger he would make us think, in trusting ourselves in a ship of which we have so good a report?"

"There was a strange, I had almost said wild, admixture of irony and concern in his manner, that is inexplicable! He certainly uttered nonsense part of the time; but then he did not appear to do it without a serious object. Gertrude, you are not as familiar with nautical expressions as myself, and perhaps you are ignorant that your good aunt, in her admiration of a profession that she has certainly a right to love, sometimes makes——"

"I know it—I know it, at least I often think so," the other interrupted, in a manner which plainly manifested that she found no pleasure in dwelling on the disagreeable subject. "It was exceedingly presuming, madam, in a stranger, however, to amuse himself, if he did it, with so amiable and trivial a weakness, if indeed weakness it be."

"It was," Mrs. Wyllys steadily continued; "and yet he did not appear to me like one of those empty minds that find pleasure in exposing the follies of others. You may remember, Gertrude, that yesterday, while at the ruin, Mrs. De Lacey made some remarks expressive of her admiration of a ship under sail?"

"Yes, yes, I remember them," said the niece, a little impatiently.

"One of her terms was particularly incorrect, as I happen to know from my own familiarity with the language of sailors."

"I thought as much by the expression of your eye," returned Gertrude; "but—"

"Listen, my love. It certainly was not remarkable that a lady should make a trifling error in the use of so peculiar a language; but it is singular that a seaman himself should commit the same fault in precisely the same words. This the youth of whom we are speaking did; and, what is no less surprising, the old man assented to the same, just as if they had been correctly uttered."

"Perhaps," said Gertrude, in a low tone, "they may have heard that attachment to this description of conversation is a foible of Mrs. De Lacey. I am sure after this, dear madam, you cannot any longer consider the stranger a gentleman!"

"I should think no more about it, love, were it not for a feeling I can neither account for nor define. I would I could see him again!"

A slight exclamation from her companion interrupted her words; and, the next instant, the subject of her thoughts leaped the wall, apparently in quest of the rattan that had fallen at the feet of Gertrude, occasioning her alarm. After apologizing for his intrusion, and recovering his lost property, Wilder was slowly preparing to retire, as if nothing had happened. There was a softness and delicacy in his manner, which was probably intended to convince the younger of the ladies that he was not entirely without some claims to the title she had recently denied him, and which was certainly not without its effect. The countenance of Mrs. Wyllys was pale; her lip quivered, though the steadiness of her voice proved it was not with alarm, as she hastily said—

"Remain a moment, sir, if your presence is not required elsewhere. There is something so remarkable in this meeting, that I could wish to improve it."

Wilder bowed, and again faced the ladies whom he had just been about to quit, like one who felt he had no right to intrude a moment longer than had been necessary to recover that which had been

lost by his pretended awkwardness. When Mrs. Wyllys found that her wish was so unexpectedly realized, she hesitated as to the manner in which she should next proceed.

"I have been thus bold, sir," she said, in some embarrassment, "on account of the opinion you so lately expressed concerning the vessel which now lies ready to put to sea the instant she is favored with a wind."

"The *Royal Caroline?*" Wilder carelessly replied.

"That is her name, I believe."

"I hope, madam, that nothing which I have said," he hastily continued, "will have an effect to prejudice you against the ship. I will pledge myself that she is made of excellent materials, and then I have not the least doubt but she is very ably commanded."

"And yet have you not hesitated to say that you consider a passage in this very vessel more dangerous than one in any other ship that will probably leave a port of the provinces in many months to come."

"I did," answered Wilder, with a manner not to be mistaken.

"Will you explain your reasons for this opinion?"

"If I remember rightly, I gave them to the lady whom I had the honor to see an hour ago."

"That individual, sir, is no longer here, neither is she to trust her person in the vessel. This young lady and myself, with our attendants, will be the only passengers."

"I understood it so," returned Wilder, keeping his gaze riveted on the speaking countenance of Gertrude.

"And, now that there is no apprehension of any mistake, may I ask you to repeat the reasons why you think there will be danger in embarking in the *Royal Caroline?*"

Wilder started, and even had the grace to color, when he met the attentive look with which Mrs. Wyllys awaited his answer.

"You would not have me repeat, madam," he stammered, "what I have already said on the subject?"

"I would not, sir; once will suffice for such an explanation; still, I am persuaded you have other reasons for your words."

"It is exceedingly difficult for a seaman to speak of ships in any other than technical language, which must be the next thing to being unintelligible to one of your sex. You have never been at sea, madam?"

"Very often."

"Then I may hope, possibly, to make myself understood. You must be conscious, madam, that no small part of the safety of a ship depends on the very material point of keeping her right side uppermost; sailors call it 'making her stand up.' Now, I need not say, I am quite sure, to a lady of your intelligence, that if the *Caroline* fall on her beam, there will be imminent hazard to all on board?"

"Nothing can be clearer; the same risk would be incurred in any other vessel."

"Without doubt, if any other vessel should trip. But I have pursued my profession for many years, without meeting with such a misfortune, but once. Then the fastenings of the bowsprit——"

"Are good as ever came from the hand of a rigger," said a voice behind them.

The whole party turned, and beheld, at a little distance, the old seaman already introduced, mounted on some object on the other side of the wall, against which he was very coolly leaning, and whence he overlooked the whole interior of the grounds.

"I have been at the water-side to look at the boat, at the wish of Madam De Lacey, the widow of my late noble commander and admiral; and, let other men think as they may, I am ready to swear that the *Royal Caroline* has as well-secured a bowsprit as any ship that carries the British flag! Aye, nor is that all I will say in her favor; she is throughout neatly and lightly sparred, and has no more of a wall-side than the walls of yonder church tumble-home. I am an old man, and my reckoning has got to the last leaf of the log-book; therefore it is little interest that I have, or can have, in this brig or that schooner; but this much will I say, which is, that it is just as wicked,

and as little likely to be forgiven, to speak scandal of a wholesome and stout ship, as it is to talk amiss of a Christian."

The old man spoke with energy, and with a show of honest indignation, which did not fail to make an impression on the ladies, at the same time that it brought certain ungrateful admonitions to the conscience of the understanding Wilder.

"You perceive, sir," said Mrs. Wyllys, after waiting in vain for the reply of the young seaman, "that it is very possible for two men, of equal advantages, to disagree on a professional point. Which am I to believe?"

"Whichever your own excellent sense should tell you is most likely to be correct. I repeat, and in a sincerity to whose truth I call heaven to witness, that no mother or sister of mine should, with my consent, embark in the *Caroline*."

"This is incomprehensible," said Mrs. Wyllys, turning to Gertrude, and speaking only for her ear. "My reason tells me that we have been trifled with by this young man; and yet his protestations are so earnest and apparently so sincere than I cannot shake off the impression they have made. To which of the two, my love, do you feel most inclined to yield credence?"

"You know how very ignorant I am, dear madam, of all these things," said Gertrude, dropping her eyes to the faded sprig she was plucking; "but to me that old wretch has a very presuming and vicious look."

"You then think the younger most entitled to belief?"

"Why not, since you think he is a gentleman?"

"I know not that his superior situation in life entitles him to greater credit. Men often obtain such advantages to abuse them. I am afraid, sir," continued Mrs. Wyllys, turning to the expecting Wilder, "that, unless you see fit to be more frank, we shall be compelled to refuse you our faith, and must persevere in the intention to profit by the opportunity of the *Royal Caroline* to get to the Carolinas."

"From the bottom of my heart, madam, I regret the determination."

"It may still be in your power to change it, by being more explicit."

Wilder appeared to muse; once or twice his lips moved, as if he were about to speak. Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude awaited his intentions with evident interest; but, after a long and seemingly hesitating pause, he disappointed both by saying—

"I am sorry that I have not the ability to make myself better understood. It can only be the fault of my dullness; for I again affirm that the danger is as apparent to my eyes as the sun at noon-day."

"Then we must continue blind, sir," returned Mrs. Wyllys, with a cold salute. "I thank you for your good intentions; but you cannot blame us for not consenting to follow advice which is buried in so much obscurity. Although in our own grounds, we shall be pardoned the rudeness of leaving you. The hour appointed for our departure has arrived."

Wilder returned the grave bow of Mrs. Wyllys with one quite as formal as her own, though he bent with greater grace and with more cordiality to the deep, hurried courtesy of Gertrude Grayson. He remained in the precise spot in which they left him, until he saw them enter the villa; and he even fancied he could catch the anxious expression of another timid glance which the latter threw in his direction, as her light form appeared to float from before his sight. Placing one hand on the wall, the young sailor then leaped into the highway. As his feet struck the ground, the slight shock seemed to awake him from his abstraction, and he became conscious that he stood within six feet of the old mariner, who had now twice stepped so rudely between him and the object he had so much at heart. The latter did not allow him time to give utterance to his disappointment, for he was the first himself to speak.

"Come, brother," he said, in friendly, confidential tones, and shaking his head, like one who wished to show to his companion that he was aware of the deception he had attempted to practice; "come, brother, you have stood far enough on this tack, and it is time to try another. I've been young myself in time, and I

know what a hard matter it is to give the devil a wide berth, when there is fun to be found in sailing in his company. But old age brings us to our reckonings; and when life is getting on short allowance with a poor fellow, he begins to think of being sparing with his tricks, just as water is saved in a ship when the calms set in, after it has been spilled about deck like rain for weeks and months on end. Thought comes with gray hairs, and no one is the worse for providing a little of it among his other small stores."

"I had hoped, when I gave you the bottom of the hill, and took the top myself," returned Wilder, without even deigning to look at his disagreeable companion, "that we had parted company forever. As you seem, however, to prefer the high ground, I leave you to enjoy it at your leisure; I shall now descend into the town."

The old man shuffled after him, with a gait that rendered it difficult for Wilder, who was by this time in a fast walk, to outstrip him without resorting to the undignified expedient of actual flight. Vexed alike with himself and his tormentor, he was tempted to offer some violence to the latter; and then, recalled to his recollection by the dangerous impulse, he moderated his pace, and continued his route, with a determination to be superior to any emotions that such a pitiful object could excite.

"You were going under such a press of sail, young master," said the stubborn old mariner, who still kept a pace or two in his rear, "that I had to set everything to hold way with you; but you now seem to be getting reasonable, and we may as well lighten the passage by a little profitable talk. You had nearly made the oldish lady believe the good ship *Royal Caroline* was the *Flying Dutchman*."

"And why did you see fit to undeceive her?" bluntly demanded Wilder.

"Would you have a man, who has followed blue water fifty years, scandalize wood and iron after so wild a manner? The character of a ship is as dear to an old sea-dog as the character of his wife or his sweetheart."

"Hark ye, friend; you live, I suppose, like other people, by eating and drinking?"

"A little of the first, and a good deal of the last," returned the other, with a chuckle.

"And you get both, like most seamen, by hard work, great risk, and the severest exposure?"

"Hum! 'Making our money like horses, and spending it like asses!'—that is said to be the way with us all."

"Now, then, you have an opportunity of making some with less labor; you may spend it to suit your own fancy. Will you engage in my service for a few hours, with this for your bounty, and as much more for wages, provided you deal honestly?"

The old man stretched out a hand, and took the guinea which Wilder had showed over his shoulder without appearing to deem it at all necessary to face his recruit.

"It's no sham?" said the latter, stopping to ring the metal on a stone.

"'Tis gold, as pure as ever came from the mint."

The other very coolly pocketed the coin; and then, with a certain hardened and decided way, as if he were ready for anything, he demanded:

"What hen-roost am I to rob for this?"

"You are to do no such pitiful act; you have only to perform a little of that which, I fancy, you are no stranger to. Can you keep a false log?"

"Aye; and swear to it, on occasion. I understand you. You are tired of twisting the truth like a new-laid rope, and you wish to turn the job over to me."

"Something so. You must unsay all you have said concerning yonder ship; and, as you have had cunning enough to get on the weather side of Mrs. De Lacey, you must improve your advantage, by making matters a little worse than I have represented them to be. Tell me, that I may judge of your qualifications, did you, in truth, ever sail with the worthy rear-admiral?"

"As I am an honest and religious Christian, I never heard of the worthy old man before yesterday. O! you may trust

me in these matters! I am not likely to spoil a history for want of facts."

"I think you will do. Now listen to my plan——"

"Stop, worthy messmate," interrupted the other; "'stones can hear,' they say on shore; we sailors know that the pumps have ears on board a ship: have you ever seen such a place as the 'Foul Anchor' tavern in this town?"

"I have been there."

"I hope you like it well enough to go again. Here we will part. You shall haul on the wind, being the lightest sailor, and make a stretch or two among these houses, until you are well to windward of yonder church. You will then have plain sailing down upon hearty Joe Joram's, where is to be found as snug an anchorage for an honest trader as in any inn in the colonies. I will keep away down this hill, and, considering the difference in our rate of sailing, we shall not be long after one another in port."

"And what is to be gained by so much maneuvering? Can you listen to nothing which is not steeped in rum?"

"You offend me by the word. You shall see what it is to send a sober messenger on your errands, when the time comes. But, suppose we are seen speaking to each other on the highway—why, as you are in such low repute just now, I shall lose my character with the ladies altogether."

"There may be reason in that. Hasten, then, to meet me; for, as they spoke of embarking soon, there is not a minute to lose."

"No fear of their breaking ground so suddenly," returned the old man, holding the palm of his hand above his head to catch the wind. "There is not yet air enough to cool the burning cheeks of that young beauty; and, depend on it, the signal will not be given to them until the sea-breeze is fairly come in."

Wilder waved his hand, and stepped lightly along the road the other had indicated to him, ruminating on the figure which the fresh and youthful charms of Gertrude had extorted from one even as old and as coarse as his new ally. His companion followed his person, for a moment, with an amused look and an ironical cast of the eye; and then he also quickened his pace, in order to reach the place of rendezvous in sufficient season.

CHAPTER X.

"Forewarn him that he use no scurrilous words."
—WINTER'S TALE.

As Wilder approached the "Foul Anchor," he beheld every symptom of a strong excitement existing within the bosom of the hitherto peaceful town. More than half the women, and perhaps one-fourth of all the men, within a reasonable proximity of that well-known inn, were assembled before its door, listening to one of the former sex, who declaimed in tones so shrill and penetrating as not to leave the proprietors of the curious and attentive countenances in the outer circle of the crowd the smallest rational ground of complaint on the score of impartiality. Our adventurer hesitated, with the sudden consciousness of one but newly embarked in such enterprises as that in which he had so recently enlisted, when he first saw these signs of commotion; nor did he determine to proceed, until he caught a glimpse of his aged confederate, elbowing his way through the mass of bodies with a perseverance and an energy that promised to bring him right speedily into the very presence of her who uttered such piercing plaints. Encouraged by this example, the young man advanced, but was content to take his position in a situation that left him entire command of his limbs, and, consequently, in a condition to make a timely retreat should the latter measure prove expedient.

"I call on you, Earthly Potter, and you, Preserved Green, and you, Faithful Wanton," cried Desire, as he came within hearing, pausing to catch a morsel of breath, before she proceeded in her affecting appeal to the neighborhood; "and you too, Upright Crook, and you too, Relent Flint, and you, Wealthy Poor,* to be

* This whimsical collection of names may strike the reader as over-charged, and yet they are all taken from the local history of Rhode Island.

witnesses and testimonials in my behalf. You, and all and each of you, can qualify, if you will, that I have ever been a slaving and loving consort of the man who has deserted me in my age, leaving so many of his own children on my hands, to feed and to rear, besides——"

"What certainty is there," interrupted the landlord of the "Foul Anchor" most opportunely, "that the good man has absconded? It was a merry day, the one that is just gone, and it is quite in reason to believe your husband was, like some others I can name—a thing I shall not be so unwise as to do—a little of what I call how-come-ye-so, and that his nap holds on longer than common. I'll engage we shall all see the honest tailor creeping out of some of the barns shortly, as fresh and as ready for his bitters as if he had not wet his throat with cold water since the last time of general rejoicing."

A low but pretty general laugh followed this effect of tavern wit, though it failed in exciting even a smile on the disturbed visage of Desire, which, by its doleful outline, appeared to have taken leave of all its risible properties forever.

"Not he, nŏt he," exclaimed the disconsolate consort of the goodman; "he has not the heart to get himself courageous in loyal drinking, on such an occasion as merry-making on account of his Majesty's glory: he was a man altogether for work; and it is chiefly for his hard labor that I have reason to complain. After being so long used to rely on his toil, it is a sore cross to a dependent woman to be thrown suddenly and altogether on herself for support. But I'll be revenged on him, if there's a law to be found in Rhode Island, or in the Providence Plantations! Let him dare to keep his pitiful image out of my sight the lawful time, and then, when he returns, he shall find himself, as many a vagabond has been before him, without wife, as he will be without a house to lay his graceless head in." Then, catching a glimpse of the inquiring face of the old seaman, who by this time had worked his way to her very side, she abruptly added, "Here is a stranger in the place, and one who has lately arrived! Did you meet a straggling runaway, friend, in your journey hither?"

"I had too much trouble in navigating my old hulk on dry land, to log the name and rate of every craft I fell in with," returned the other, with infinite composure; "and yet, now you speak of such a thing, I do remember of coming within hail of a poor fellow, just about the beginning of the morning watch, somewhere here-away, up in the bushes between this town and the bit of a ferry that carries one to the main."

"What sort of a man was he?" demanded five or six anxious voices, in a breath; among which the tones of Desire, however, maintained their supremacy, rising above those of all the others like the strains of a first-rate artist flourishing a quaver above the more modest trills of the rest of the troupe.

"What sort of a man! Why, a fellow with his arms rigged athwart-ship, and his legs stepped like those of all other Christians, to be sure: but now you speak of it, I remember that he had a bit of a sheep-shank in one of his legs, and rolled a good deal as he went ahead."

"It was he!" added the same chorus of voices. Five or six of the speakers stole from the throng with the intention of hurrying after the delinquent, in order to secure the payment of certain small balances of account, in which the unhappy and much traduced goodman stood indebted to the several parties. Had we leisure to record the manner in which these praiseworthy efforts to save an honest penny were conducted, the reader might find much subject of amusement in the secret diligence with which each worthy tradesman endeavored to outwit his neighbor on the occasion, as well as in the common subterfuges which were adopted to veil their real designs, when all met at the ferry deceived and disappointed in their object.

As Desire, however, had neither legal demand on, nor hope of favor, from her truant husband, she was content to pursue on the spot such farther inquiries in behalf of the fugitive as she saw fit to make. It is possible the pleasures of freedom, in

the shape of the contemplated divorce, were already floating before her active mind, with the soothing perspective of second nuptials, backed by the influence of such another picture as might be drawn from the recollections of her first love; the whole having a manifest tendency to pacify her awakened spirit, and to give a certain portion of directness and energy to the subsequent interrogatories.

"Had he a thieving look?" she demanded, without attending to the manner in which she was so suddenly deserted by all those who had just expressed the strongest sympathy in her loss. "Was he a man that had the air of a sneaking runaway?"

"As for his head-piece, I will not engage to give a very true account," returned the old mariner; "though he had a look of one who had been kept, a good deal of his time, in the lee-scuppers. If I should give an opinion, the poor devil has had too much——"

"Idle time, you would say; yes, yes; it has been his misfortune to be out of work a good deal latterly, and wickedness has got into his head for want of something better to think of. Too much——"

"Wife," interrupted the old man emphatically. Another general, and a far less equivocal, laugh at the expense of Desire, succeeded this blunt declaration. Nothing intimidated by such a manifest assent to the opinion of the hardy seaman, the undaunted virago resumed—

"Ah! you little know the suffering and forbearance I have endured with the man in so many long years. Had the fellow you met the look of one who had left an injured woman behind him?"

"I can't say there was anything about him which said, in so many words, that the woman he had left at her moorings was more or less injured," returned the tar, with commendable discrimination; "but there was enough about him to show that, however and wherever he may have stowed his wife, if wife she was, he had not seen fit to leave all her outfit at home. The man had plenty of female toggery around his neck; I suppose he found it more agreeable than her arms."

"What!" exclaimed Desire, looking aghast; "has he dared to rob me? What had he of mine? not the gold beads?"

"I'll not swear they were gold."

"The villain!" continued the enraged termagant, catching her breath like a person that has just been submerged in water longer than is agreeable to human nature, and forcing her way through the crowd with such vigor as soon to be in a situation to fly to her secret hoards, in order to ascertain the extent of her misfortune; "the sacrilegious villain! to rob the wife of his bosom, the mother of his children, and——"

"Well, well," again interrupted the landlord of the "Foul Anchor," with the unseasonable voice. "I never before heard the goodman suspected of roguery, though the neighborhood was ever backward in calling him chicken-hearted."

The old seaman looked the publican full in the face, with much meaning in his eye, as he answered—

"If the honest tailor never robbed any but that virago, there would be no great thieving sin to be laid to his account; for every bead he had about him wouldn't serve to pay his ferriage. I could carry all the gold on his neck in my eye, and see none the worse for it. But it is a shame to stop the entrance into a licensed tavern with such a mob, as if it were an embargoed port; and so I've sent the woman after her valuables, and all the idlers, as you see, in her wake."

Joe Joram gazed on the speaker like a man enthralled by some mysterious charm; neither answering, nor altering the direction of his eye, for near a minute. Then, suddenly breaking out in a deep and powerful laugh, as if he were not backward in enjoying the artifice, which certainly had produced the effect of removing the crowd from his own door to that of the absent tailor, he flourished his arm in the way of greeting, and exclaimed—

"Welcome, Tarry Bob; welcome, old boy, welcome! From what cloud have you fallen? and before what wind have

you been running, that Newport is again your harbor?"

"Too many questions to be answered in an open roadstead, friend Joram; and altogether too dry a subject for a husky conversation. When I am berthed in one of your inner cabins, with a mug of flip and a kid of good Rhode Island beef within grappling distance, why, as many questions as you choose, and as many answers, you know, as suits my appetite."

"And who's to pay the piper, honest Bob? whose ship's purser will pay your check now?" continued the publican, showing the old sailor in, however, with a readiness that seemed to contradict the doubt expressed by his words of any reward for his extraordinary civility.

"Who?" interrupted the other, displaying the money so lately received from Wilder, in such a manner that it might be seen by the few bystanders who remained, as if he would himself furnish a sufficient apology for the distinguished manner in which he was received, "who but this gentleman? I can boast of being backed by the countenance of his sacred Majesty himself, God bless him!"

"God bless him!" echoed several of the loyal lieges, and that, too, in a place which has since heard such different cries, and where the same words would now excite nearly as much surprise, though less alarm, than an earthquake.

"God bless him!" repeated Joram, opening the door of an inner room, and pointing the way to his customer, "and all that are favored with his countenance! Walk in, old Bob; you shall soon grapple with half an ox."

Wilder, who had approached the outer door of the tavern as the mob receded, witnessed the retreat of the two worthies into the recesses of the house, and immediately entered the barroom himself. While deliberating on the manner in which he should arrive at a communication with his new confederate, without attracting too much attention to so odd an association, the landlord returned in person to relieve him. After casting a hasty glance around the apartment, his look settled on our adventurer, whom he approached in a manner half doubting, half decided.

"What success, sir, in looking for a ship?" he demanded, now recognizing, for the first time, the stranger with whom he had before held converse that morning. "More hands than places to employ them?"

"I am not sure it will so prove. In my walk on the hill I met an old seaman, who——"

"Hum!" interrupted the publican, with an intelligible, though stolen, sign to follow. "You will find it more convenient, sir, to take your breakfast in another room." Wilder followed his conductor, who left the public apartment by a different door from that by which he had led his other guest into the interior of the house, wondering at the air of mystery that the innkeeper saw fit to assume on the occasion. After leading him by a circuitous passage, the latter showed Wilder, in profound silence, up a private stairway into the very attic of the building. Here he rapped lightly at a door, and was bid to enter by a voice that caused our adventurer to start by its deepness and severity. On finding himself, however, in a low and confined room, he saw no other occupant than the seaman who had just been greeted by the publican as an old acquaintance, and by a name to which he might, by his attire, well lay claim to be entitled—that of Tarry Bob. While Wilder was staring about him, a good deal surprised at the situation in which he was placed, the landlord retired, and he found himself alone with his confederate. The latter was already engaged in discussing the fragment of the ox just mentioned, and in quaffing some liquid that seemed equally adapted to his taste, although sufficient time had not certainly been allowed to prepare the beverage he had seen fit to order. Without allowing his visitor leisure for much farther reflection, the old mariner made a motion to him to take the only vacant chair in the room, while he continued his employment on the sirloin with as much assiduity as if no interruption had taken place.

"Honest Joe Joram always makes a

friend of his butcher," he said, after ending a draught that threatened to drain the mug to the bottom. "There is such a flavor about his beef that one might mistake it for the fin of a halibut. You have been in foreign parts, shipmate, or I may call you 'messmate,' since we are both anchored nigh the same kid—but you have doubtless been in foreign countries?"

"Often; I should else be but a miserable seaman."

"Then, tell me frankly, have you ever been in the kingdom that can furnish such rations—fish, flesh, fowl, and fruits—as this very noble land of America, in which we are now both moored? and in which I suppose we both of us were born?"

"It would be carrying the love of home a little too far, to believe in such universal superiority," returned Wilder, willing to divert the conversation from his real object, until he had time to arrange his ideas, and assure himself he had no other auditor but his visible companion. "It is generally admitted that England excels us in all these articles."

"By whom? by your know-nothings and bold talkers. But I, a man who has seen the four quarters of the earth, and no small part of the water besides, give the lie to such empty boasters. We are colonies, friend, we are colonies; and it is as bold in a colony to tell the mother that it has the advantage in this or that particular, as it would be in a foremast Jack to tell his officer he was wrong, though he knew it to be true. I am but a poor man, Mr. ——. By what name may I call your honor?"

"Me! my name? Harris."

"I am but a poor man, Mr. Harris; but I have had charge of a watch in my time, old and rusty as I seem, nor have I spent so many long nights on deck without keeping thoughts at work, though I may not have overhauled as much philosophy, in so doing, as a paid parish priest, or a feed lawyer. Let me tell you, it is a disheartening thing to be nothing but a dweller in a colony. It keeps down the pride and spirit of a man, it lends a hand in making him what his masters would be glad to have him. I shall say nothing of fruits, and meats, and other eatables, that come from the land of which both you and I have heard and know too much, unless it be to point to yonder sun, and then to ask the question, whether you think King George has the power to make it shine on the bit of an island where he lives, as it shines here on his broad provinces of America?"

"Certainly not; and yet you know that every one must allow that the productions of England are so very much superior——"

"Aye, aye; a colony always sails under the lee of its mother. Talk does it all, friend Harris. Talk, talk, talk; a man can talk himself into a fever, or set a ship's company by the ears. He can talk a cherry into a peach, or a flounder into a whale. Now here is the whole of this long coast of America, and all her rivers, and lakes, and brooks, swarming with such treasures as any man might fatten on; and yet his majesty's servants, who come among us, talk of their turbots, and their sole, and their carp, as if the Lord had only made such fish, and the devil had let the other slip through his fingers, without asking leave."

Wilder turned and fastened a look of surprise on the old man, who continued to eat, however, as if he had uttered nothing but what might be considered as a matter-of-course opinion.

"You are more attached to your birthplace than loyal, friend," said the young mariner, a little austerely.

"I am not fish-loyal, at least. What the Lord made, one may speak of, I hope, without offense. As to the government, that is a rope twisted by the hands of a man, and——"

"And what?" demanded Wilder, perceiving that the other hesitated.

"Hum! Why, I fancy man will undo his own work, when he can find nothing better to busy himself in. No harm in saying that, either, I hope?"

"So much, that I must call your attention to the business that has brought us together. You have not so soon forgotten the earnest-money you received?"

The old sailor shoved the dish from before him; and, folding his arms, he looked

his companion full in the eye, as he calmly answered:

"When I am fairly enlisted in a service, I am a man to be counted on. I hope you sail under the same colors, friend Harris?"

"It would be dishonest to do otherwise. There is one thing you will excuse—before I proceed to detail my plans and wishes, I must take occasion to examine this closet in order to be sure that we are actually alone."

"You will find little there except the toggery of some of honest Joe's female gender. As the door is not fastened with any extraordinary care, you have only to look for yourself, since seeing is believing."

Wilder did not seem disposed to wait for this permission; he opened the door while the other was speaking, and finding that the closet actually contained little else than the articles named by his companion, he turned away like a man who was disappointed.

"Were you alone when I entered?" he demanded after a thoughtful pause.

"Honest Joram, and yourself."

"No one else?"

"None that I saw," returned the other, his manner betraying slight uneasiness; "if you think otherwise, let us overhaul the room. Should my hand fall on a listener, the salute will not be light!"

"Hold—answer me a single question; who bade me enter?"

Tarry Bob, who had risen with a good deal of alacrity, now reflected in his turn, for an instant, and closed his musings by indulging in a low laugh.

"Ah! I see that you have got your ideas a little jammed. A man cannot talk the same, with a small portion of ox in his mouth, as if his tongue had as much sea-room as a ship four-and-twenty hours out."

"Then it was you?"

"I'll swear to that much," returned Bob, resuming his seat like one who had settled the whole affair to his entire satisfaction; "and now, friend Harris, if you are ready to lay bare your mind, I'm just as ready to look at it."

Wilder did not appear to be quite as well content with the explanation as his companion; but he drew a chair and prepared to open his subject.

"I am not to tell you, friend, after what you have heard and seen, that I have no very strong desire that the lady with whom we have both spoken this morning, and her companion, should sail in the *Royal Caroline*. I suppose it is enough for our purposes that you should know the fact; the reason why I should prefer they should remain where they are, can be of no moment as to the duty you are to undertake."

"You need not tell an old seaman how to gather in the slack of a running idea," cried Bob, chuckling and winking at his companion, in a way that displeased the latter by its familiarity; "I have not lived fifty years on the blue water to mistake it for the skies."

"You then fancy, sir, that my motive is no secret to you?"

"It needs no spy-glass to see, that while the old people say 'Go,' the young people would like to stay where they are."

"You do both of the young people much injustice, then; until yesterday, I never laid eyes on the person you mean."

"Ah! I see how it is; the owners of the *Caroline* have not been so civil as they ought, and you are paying them a small debt of thanks!"

"That is possibly a means of retaliation that might suit your taste," said Wilder, gravely; "but which is not much in accordance with mine. The whole of the parties are utter strangers to me."

"Hum! I suppose you belong to the vessel in the outer harbor; and, though you don't hate your enemies, you love your friends. We must contrive the means to coax the ladies to take passage in the slaver."

"God forbid!"

"God forbid! Now I think, friend Harris, you set up the backstays of your conscience a little too taut. Though I cannot, and do not, agree with you in all you have said concerning the *Royal Caroline*, I see no reason to doubt that we shall have but one mind about the other vessel. I call

her a wholesome-looking and well-proportioned craft, and one that a king might sail in with comfort."

"I deny it not; still I like her not."

"Well, I am glad of that; and since the matter is fairly between us, Master Harris, I have a word or two to say concerning that very ship. I am an old sea-dog, and one not easily blinded in the trade. Do you not find something, that is not in character with an honest trader, in the manner in which they have laid that vessel at her anchors, without the fort, and the sleepy look she bears, at the same time that any one may see that she is not built to catch oysters, or to carry cattle to the islands!"

"As you have said, I think her a wholesome and a tight-built ship. Of what evil practices, however, do you suspect her?—perhaps she robs the revenue?"

"Hum! I am not sure it would be pleasant to smuggle in such a vessel, though your contraband is a merry trade, after all. She has a pretty battery, as well as one can see from this distance."

"I dare say her owners are not tired of her yet, and would gladly keep her from falling into the hands of the French."

"Well, well, I may be wrong; but, unless sight is going with my years, all is not as it would be on board that slaver provided her papers were true, and she had the lawful name to her letters of marque. What think you, honest Joe, in this matter?"

Wilder turned impatiently and found that the landlord had entered the room, with a step so light as to have escaped his attention, which had been drawn to his companion with a force that the reader will readily comprehend. The air of surprise with which Joram regarded the speaker was certainly not affected; for the question was repeated, and in still more definite terms, before he saw fit to reply.

"I ask you, honest Joe, if you think the slaver in the outer harbor of this port a true man?"

"You come across one, Bob, in your bold way, with such startling questions," returned the publican, casting his eyes obliquely around him, as if to make sure of the character of his audience, "such stirring opinions, that really I am often nonplussed to get the ideas together to make a saving answer."

"It is droll enough, truly, to see the landlord of the 'Foul Anchor' dumfounded," returned the old man, with perfect composure in mien and eye. "I ask you, in plain English, if you do not suspect something wrong about that slaver?"

"Wrong! Good heavens, Mister Robert, recollect what you are saying. I would not, for the custom of his Majesty's Lord High Admiral, have any discouraging words uttered in my house against the reputation of any virtuous and fair-dealing slaver! The Lord protect me from blackening the character of any honest subject of the King!"

"Do you see nothing wrong, worthy and tender Joram, about the ship in the outer harbor?" repeated Mister Robert, without moving eye, limb or muscle.

"Well, since you press me so hard for an opinion, and seeing you are a customer who pays freely for what he orders, I will say that, if there is anything unreasonable or even illegal in the deportment of the gentlemen——"

"You sail so nigh the wind, friend Joram," coolly interrupted the old man, "as to keep everything shaking, your teeth included. Just bethink you of a plain answer; have you seen anything wrong about the slaver?"

"Nothing, on my conscience, then," said the publican, puffing not unlike a cetaceous fish that had come to the surface to breathe; "as I am an unworthy sinner, sitting under the preaching of good and faithful Dr. Dogma, nothing—nothing."

"No! Then you are a duller man than I had rated you at! Do you *suspect* nothing?"

"Heaven protect me from suspicions! The devil besets all our minds with doubts; but weak and evil inclined is he who submits to them. The officers and crew of that ship are free drinkers, and as generous as princes; moreover, as they never

forget to clear the score before they leave the house, I call them—honest."

"And I call them—pirates!"

"Pirates!" echoed Joram, fastening his eye, with marked distrust, on the countenance of the attentive Wilder. "'Pirate' is a harsh word, Mister Robert, and should not be thrown in any gentleman's face, without testimony enough to clear one in an action of defamation, should such a thing get before twelve sworn and conscientious men. But I suppose you know what you say, and before whom you say it."

"I do; and now, as it seems that your opinion in this matter amounts to just nothing at all, will you please——"

"To do anything you order," cried Joram, delighted to change the subject.

"To go and ask the customers below if they are dry," continued the other, beckoning for the publican to retire by the way he entered, with the air of one who felt certain of being obeyed. As soon as the door was closed on the retiring landlord, he turned to his remaining comrade, and continued, "You seem as much struck aback as unbelieving Joe himself, at what you have just heard?"

"It is a harsh suspicion, and should be well supported, old man, before you venture to repeat it. What pirate has lately been heard of on this coast?"

"There is the well-known Red Rover," returned the other, dropping his voice, and casting a furtive look around him, as if even he thought extraordinary caution was necessary in uttering the formidable name.

"But he is said to keep chiefly in the Caribbean Sea."

"He is a man to be anywhere and everywhere. The King would pay him well who would put the rogue into the hands of the law."

"A thing easier planned than executed," Wilder thoughtfully answered.

"That is as it may be. I am an old fellow, and fitter to point out the way than to go ahead; but you are like a newly-fitted ship, with all your rigging tight, and your spars without a warp in them. What say you to make your fortune by selling the knaves to the King? It is only giving the devil his own a few months sooner or later."

Wilder started, and turned away from his companion like one who is little pleased by the manner in which he expressed himself. Perceiving the necessity of a reply, however, he demanded—

"And what reason have you for believing your suspicious true? or what means have you for effecting your object, if true, in the absence of the royal cruisers?"

"I cannot swear that I am right; but if sailing on the wrong tack, we can only go about when we find out the mistake. As to means, I confess they are easier named than mustered."

"Go, go; this is idle talk; a mere whim of your old brain," said Wilder coldly; "and the less said the soonest mended. All this time we are forgetting our proper business. I am half inclined to think, Mister Robert, you are holding out false lights, in order to get rid of the duty for which you are already half paid."

There was a look of satisfaction in the countenance of the old tar while Wilder was speaking that might have struck his companion, had not the young man risen to pace the narrow room, with a thoughtful and hurried step.

"Well, well," the former rejoined, endeavoring to disguise his contentment, in his customary selfish but shrewd expression, "I am an old dreamer, and often have I thought myself swimming in the sea, when I have been safe moored on dry land! I believe there must soon be a reckoning with the devil, in order that each may take his share of my poor carcass, and I be left the captain of my own ship. Now for your honor's orders."

Wilder returned to his seat, and disposed himself to give the necessary instructions to his confederate, in order that he might counteract all he had already said in favor of the outward-bound vessel.

CHAPTER XI.

"The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient; three thousand ducats! I think I may take his bond."
—MERCHANT OF VENICE.

As the day advanced, the appearance of a fresh sea-breeze setting in gradually grew stronger; and, with the increase of the wind, were to be seen all the symptoms of an intention to leave the harbor on the part of the Bristol trader. The sailing of a large ship was an event of much more importance in an American port sixty years ago than at the present hour, when a score is frequently seen to arrive and depart from one haven in a single day. Although claiming to be inhabitants of one of the principal towns of the colony, the good people of Newport did not witness the movements on board the *Caroline* with that species of indolent regard which is the fruit of satiety in sights as well as in graver things, and with which, in the course of time, the evolutions of even a fleet come to be contemplated. On the contrary, the wharfs were crowded with boys, and indeed with idlers of every growth. Even many of the more considerate and industrious of the citizens were seen loosening the grasp they usually kept on the precious minutes, and allowing them to escape uncounted, though not entirely unheeded, as they yielded to the ascendency of curiosity over interest, and strayed from their shops, and their work-yards, to gaze upon the noble spectacle of a moving ship.

The tardy manner in which the crew of the *Caroline* made their preparations, however, exhausted the patience of more than one time-saving citizen. Quite as many of the better sort of the spectators had left the wharves as still remained, and yet the vessel had spread to the breeze but the solitary sheet of canvas which has been already named. Instead of answering the wishes of hundreds of weary eyes, the noble ship was seen sheering about her anchor, inclining from the passing wind, as her bows were alternately turned to the right and to the left, like a restless courser, restrained by the grasp of the groom, chafing his bit, and with difficulty keeping those limbs upon the earth with which he is shortly to bound around the ring. After more than an hour of unaccountable delay, a rumor was spread among the crowd that an accident had occurred by which some important individual belonging to the complement of the vessel was severely injured. But this rumor passed away also, and was nearly forgotten, when a sheet of flame issued from a bow-port of the *Caroline*, driving before it a cloud of curling and mounting smoke, and was succeeded by the roar of artillery. A bustle, like that which usually precedes the announcement of a long-expected event, took place among the weary expectants on the land, and every one now seemed to feel quite certain, that whatever might have occurred, it was settled that the ship should proceed.

Of all this delay, the several movements on board, the subsequent signal for sailing, and of the impatience in the crowd, Wilder had been a close observer. Posted with his back against the upright fluke of a condemned anchor, on a wharf a little apart from that occupied by most of the spectators, he had remained an hour in the same position, scarcely bending his look to his right hand or to his left. When the gun was fired he started, not with the nervous impulse which had made a hundred others do precisely the same thing, but to turn a glance along the streets that came within the range of his eye. From this hasty and uneasy examination he soon returned into his former reclining posture, though the wandering of his glances, and the whole expression of his countenance, would have told an observer that some event to which the young mariner looked forward with excessive interest was on the eve of its consummation. As minute after minute, however, rolled by, his composure was gradually restored, and a smile of satisfaction lighted his features, while his lips moved like those of a man who expressed his pleasure in a soliloquy.

In the midst of these agreeable meditations, the sound of many voices met his ears; and turning, he saw a large party within a few yards of where he stood.

He was not slow to detect among them the forms of Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude, attired in such a manner as to leave no doubt that they were on the eve of embarking.

A cloud, driving before the sun, does not produce a greater change in the aspect of the earth, than was wrought in the expression of Wilder's countenance by this unexpected sight. He was just implicitly relying on the success of an artifice, which, though sufficiently shallow, he flattered himself was deep enough to act on the timidity and credulity of woman; and now he was suddenly awakened from his self-gratulation, to prove the utter disappointment of his hopes. Muttering a suppressed but deep execration against the perfidy of his confederate, he shrunk as much as possible behind the fluke of the anchor, fastening his eyes sullenly on the ship.

The party which accompanind the travelers to the water-side was, like all other parties made to take leave of valued friends, taciturn and restless. Those who spoke did so with a rapid and impatient utterance, as if they wished to hurry the very separation they regretted; and the features of those who said nothing looked full of meaning. Wilder heard several affectionate and warm-hearted wishes given, and promises extorted, from youthful voices, all of which was answered in the mournful tones of Gertrude, and yet he obstinately refused to bend even a stolen look in the direction of the speakers.

At length, a footstep within a few feet of him induced a hasty glance aside. His eye met that of Mrs. Wyllys. The lady started, as well as our young mariner, at the sudden recognition; but, recovering her self-possession, she observed, with admirable coolness:

"You perceive, sir, that we are not to be deterred from an enterprise once undertaken, by any ordinary dangers."

"I hope you may not have reason, madam, to repent your courage."

A short, but painfully thoughtful pause succeeded, on the part of Mrs. Wyllys. Casting a look behind her, to ascertain that she was not overheard, she drew a step nigher to the youth, and said, in a voice even lower than before:

"It is not yet too late. Give me but the shadow of a reason for what you have said, and I will wait for another ship. My feelings are foolishly inclined to believe you, young man, though my judgment tells me there is but too much probability that you trifle with our womanish fears."

"Trifle! On such a matter I would trifle with none of your sex, least of all with you!"

"This is extraordinary! For a stranger it is inexplicable! Have you a fact, or a reason, which I can plead to the friends of my young charge?"

"You know of them already."

"Then, sir, I am compelled, against my will, to believe your motive is one that you have some powerful consideration for wishing to conceal," coldly returned the disappointed and even mortified governess. "For your own sake, I hope it is not unworthy. I thank you for all that is well intended; if you have spoken aught which is otherwise, I forgive it."

They parted, with the restraint of people who feel that distrust rests between them. Wilder again shrank behind his cover, maintaining a proud position and a countenance that was grave to austerity. His situation, however, compelled him to become an auditor of most of what was now said.

The principal speaker, as was meet on such an occasion, was Mrs. De Lacey, whose voice was often raised in sage admonitions and professional opinions blended, in a manner that all would admire, though none of her sex but they who had enjoyed the singular good-fortune of sharing in the intimate confidence of a flag-officer might ever hope to imitate.

"And now, my dearest niece," concluded the relict of the Rear-admiral, after exhausting her breath and stores of wisdom, in numberless exhortations to be careful of her health, to write often, to repeat the actual words of her private message to her brother, the General, to keep below in gales of wind, to be particular in the account of any extraordi-

nary sights she might have the good fortune te behold in the passage, and, in short, in all other matters likely to grow out of such a leave-taking; "and now, my dearest niece, I commit you to the mighty deep, and One far mightier—to Him who made it. Banish from your thoughts all recollections of anything you may have heard concerning the imperfections of the *Royal Caroline;* for the opinion of the aged seaman who sailed with the lamented Admiral assures me that they are all founded in mistake." ("The treacherous villain!" muttered Wilder.) "Who spoke?" said Mrs. De Lacey; but, receiving no reply, she continued: "His opinion is also exactly in accordance with my own, on more mature reflection. To be sure, it is culpable neglect to depend on bobstays and gammonings for the security of the bowsprit; but even this is an oversight, which, as my old friend has just told me, may be remedied by 'preventers and lashings.' I have written a note to the master—Gertrude, my dear, be careful ever to call the master of the ship *Mister* Nichols; for none but those who bear his Majesty's commission are entitled to be termed *Captains;* it is an honorable station, and should always be treated with reverence, it being, in fact, next in rank to a flag-officer—I have written a note to the master on the subject, and he will see the neglect repaired; and so, my love, God bless you; take the best possible care of yourself; write me by every opportunity; remember my kindest love to your father, and be very minute in your description of the whales."

The eyes of the worthy and kind-hearted widow were filled with tears, and there was a touch of nature in the tremor of her voice that produced a sympathetic feeling in all who heard her. The final parting took place under the impressions of these kind emotions, and, before another minute, the oars of the boat which bore the travelers to the ship were stirring the water.

Wilder listened to the well-known sounds with a feverish interest, that he might have found it difficult to explain to himself. A light touch on the elbow first drew his attention from the disagreeable subject. Surprised at the circumstance, he faced the intruder, who appeared to be a lad of apparently some fifteen years. A second look was necessary to tell the abstracted young mariner that he again saw the attendant of the Rover; he who has already been introduced to our pages under the name of Roderick.

"Your pleasure?" he demanded, when his amazement at being thus interrupted had a little subsided.

"I am directed to put these orders into your own hands," was the answer.

"Orders!" repeated the young man, with a curling lip. "The authority should be respected which issues its mandates through such a messenger."

"The authority is one that it has ever proved dangerous to disobey," gravely returned the boy.

"Indeed! Then will I look into the contents without delay, lest I fall into some fatal negligence. Are you bid to wait an answer?"

On raising his eyes from the note, after breaking its seal, the young man found that the messenger had already vanished. Perceiving how useless it would be to pursue so light a form amid the mazes of lumber that loaded the wharf and most of the adjacent shore, he opened the letter and read as follows:

"An accident has disabled the master of the outward-bound ship called the *Royal Caroline!* Her consignee is reluctant to intrust her to the officer next in rank; but sail she must. I find she has credit for speed. If you have any credentials of *character* and *competency,* profit by the occasion, and earn the station you are finally destined to fill. You have been named to some who are interested, and you have been sought diligently. If this reach you in season, be on the alert and be decided. Show no surprise at any co-operation you may unexpectedly meet. My agents are more numerous than you probably believe. The reason is obvious; gold is yellow, though I am RED."

The signature, the matter, and the style

of this letter left Wilder in no doubt as to its author. Casting a glance around him he sprang into a skiff; and, before the boat of the travelers had reached the ship, that of Wilder had skimmed the water over half the distance between her and the land. As he plied his sculls with vigorous and skillful arms, he soon stood upon her decks. Forcing his way among the crowd of attendants from the shore, that are apt to cumber a departing ship, he reached the part of the vessel where a circle of busy faces told him he should find those most concerned in her fate. Until now, he had hardly breathed clearly, much less reflected on the character of his sudden enterprise. It was too late, however, to retreat, had he been so disposed, or to abandon his purpose without incurring the hazard of exciting dangerous suspicions. A single instant served to recall his thoughts, ere he demanded:

"Do I see the owner of the *Caroline?*"

"The ship is consigned to our house," returned a sedate, deliberate, and shrewd-looking individual, in the attire of a wealthy, thrifty trader.

"I have heard that you have need of an experienced officer."

"Experienced officers are comfortable things to an owner in a vessel of value," returned the merchant. "I hope the *Caroline* is not without her portion."

"But I had heard one to supply her commander's place, for a time, was greatly needed."

"If her commander were incapable of doing his duty, such a thing might certainly come to pass. Are you seeking a berth?"

"I have come to apply for the vacancy."

"It would have been wiser had you first ascertained there existed a vacancy to fill. But you have not come to ask authority in such a ship as this, without sufficient testimony of your ability and fitness?"

"I hope these documents may prove satisfactory," said Wilder, placing in his hands a couple of unsealed letters.

During the time the other was reading the certificates, for such they proved to be, his shrewd eye was looking over his spectacles at the subject of their contents, and returning to the paper, in alternate glances, in such a way as to render it very evident that he was endeavoring to assure himself of the fidelity of the words he read by actual observation.

"Hum! This is certainly very excellent testimony in your favor, young gentleman, and—coming as it does from two so respectable and affluent houses as Spriggs, Boggs, and Tweed, and Hammer and Hacket—entitled to great credit. A richer and broader-bottomed firm than the former is not to be found in his Majesty's colonies; and I have great respect for the latter, though envious people do say that they overtrade a little."

"Since, then, you esteem them so highly, I shall not be considered hasty in presuming on their friendship?"

"Not at all, not at all, Mr.—a—a——" glancing his eye again into one of the letters; "aye, Mr. Wilder; there is never any presumption in a fair offer, in a matter of business. Without offers to sell and offers to buy, our property would never change hands, sir, ha! ha! ha! never change to a profit, you know, young gentleman."

"I am aware of the truth of what you say, and therefore I beg leave to repeat my offer."

"All perfectly fair and perfectly reasonable; but you cannot expect us, Mr. Wilder, to make a vacancy expressly for you to fill, though it must be admitted that your papers are excellent—as good as the note of Spriggs, Boggs, and Tweed themselves—not to make a vacancy expressly——"

"I had supposed the master of the ship so seriously injured——"

"Injured, but not seriously," interrupted the wary consignee, glancing his eye around at sundry shippers, and one or two spectators, who were within ear-shot: "injured certainly, but not so much as to quit the vessel. No, no, gentlemen—the good ship *Royal Caroline* proceeds on her voyage, as usual, under the care of that old and well-tried mariner, Nicholas Nichols."

"Then, sir, I am sorry to have intruded on your time at so busy a moment," said

Wilder, bowing with a disappointed air, and falling back a step, as if about to withdraw.

"Not so hasty—not so hasty; bargains are not to be concluded, young man, as you let a sail fall from the yard. It is possible that your services may be of use, though not, perhaps, in the responsible situation of master. At what rate do you value the title of 'captain?'"

"I care little for the name, provided the trust and the authority are mine."

"A very sensible youth!" muttered the discreet merchant; "and one who knows how to distinguish between the shadow and the substance! A gentleman of your good sense and character must know, however, that the reward is always proportioned to the nominal dignity. If I were acting for myself, in this business, the case would be materially changed, but, as an agent, it is a duty to consult the interest of my principal."

"The reward is of no account," said Wilder, with an eagerness that might have overreached itself, had not the individual with whom he was bargaining fastened his thoughts on the means of cheapening the other's services, with a steadiness from which they rarely swerved, when bent on so commendable an object as saving. "I seek for service."

"Then service you shall have; nor will you find us niggardly in the operation. You cannot expect an advance for a run of no more than a month; nor any perquisites in the way of storage since the ship is now full to her hatches; nor, indeed, any great price in the shape of wages, since we take you chiefly to accommodate so worthy a youth, and to honor the recommendation of so respectable a house as Spriggs, Boggs, and Tweed; but you will find us liberal. Stay—how know we that you are the person named in the invoi—I should say, recommendation?"

"Does not the fact of possessing the letters establish my character?"

"It might in peaceable times, when the realm was not scourged by war. A description of the person should have accompanied the documents, like a letter of advice with the bill. As we take you at some risk in this matter, you are not to be surprised that the price will be affected by the circumstances. We are liberal; I believe no house in the colonies pays more liberally; but then we have a character for prudence, too."

"I have already said, sir, that the price shall not interrupt our bargain."

"Good; there is pleasure in transacting business on such liberal and honorable views; and yet I wish a notarial seal, or a description of the person, had accompanied the letters. This is the signature of Robert Tweed; I know it well, and would be glad to see it at the bottom of a promissory note for ten thousand pounds; that is, with a responsible indorser; but the uncertainty is much against your pecuniary interest, young man, since we become, as it were, underwriters that you are the individual named."

"In order that your mind may be at ease on this subject, Mr. Bale," said a voice from among the little circle that was listening, with characteristic interest, to the progress of the bargain, "I can testify, or, should it be necessary, qualify to the person of the gentleman."

Wilder turned in some haste, and in no little astonishment, to discover the acquaintance whom chance had thrown in so extraordinary, and possibly in so disagreeable a manner, across his path; and that, too, in a portion of the country where he wished to believe himself an entire stranger. To his utter amazement, he found that the new speaker was no other than the landlord of the "Foul Anchor." Honest Joe stood with a perfectly composed look, and with a face that might readily have been trusted to confront a far more imposing tribunal, awaiting the result of his testimony on the wavering mind of the consignee.

"Ah! you have lodged the gentleman for a night, and you can testify that he is a punctual paymaster, and a civil inmate. But I want documents fit to be filed with the correspondence of the owner *at home*."

"I know not what sort of testimony you think fit for such good company," returned the unmoved publican, holding up

his hand with an air of admirable innocence; "but if the sworn declaration of a housekeeper is of the sort you need, you are a magistrate, and may begin to say over the words at once."

"Not I, not I, man. Though a magistrate, the oath is informal, and would not be binding in law. But what do you know of the person in question?"

"That he is as good a seaman, for his years, as any in the colonies. There may be some of more practice and greater experience—I dare say such are to be found—but as to activity, watchfulness, and prudence, it would be hard to find his equal—especially for prudence."

"You, then, are quite certain that this person is the individual named in these papers?"

Joram received the certificates with the same admirable coolness he had maintained from the commencement, and prepared to read them with the most scrupulous care. In order to effect this necessary operation, he had to put on spectacles (for the landlord of the "Foul Anchor" was in the wane of life), and Wilder fancied that he stood, during the process, a notable example of how respectable depravity may become, in appearance, when supported by a reverent air.

"This is all very true, Mr. Bale," continued the publican, removing his glasses, and returning the papers. "They have forgotten to say anything of the manner in which he saved the *Lively Nancy*, off Hatteras, and how he ran the *Peggy and Dolly* over the Savannah bar, without a pilot, blowing great guns from the northward and eastward at the time; but I, who followed the water, as you know, in my younger days, have often heard both circumstances mentioned among seafaring men, and I am a judge of the difficulty. I have an interest in this ship, neighbor Bale (for though a rich man, and I a poor one, we are nevertheless neighbors)—I say I have an interest in this ship; since she is a vessel that seldom quits Newport without leaving something to jingle in my pocket, or I should not be here to-day to see her lift her anchor."

As the publican concluded, he gave audible evidence that his visit had not gone unrewarded, by raising a music that was no less agreeable to the ears of the thrifty merchant than his own. The two worthies laughed in an understanding way, and like men who had found a particular profit in their intercourse with the *Royal Caroline*. The latter then beckoned Wilder apart; and, after a little farther preliminary discourse, the terms of the young mariner's engagement were finally settled. The true master of the ship was to remain on board, both as a security for the insurance, and in order to preserve her reputation; but it was frankly admitted that his hurt, which was no less than a broken leg, and which the surgeons were then setting, would probably keep him below for a month to come. During the time he was kept from his duty, his functions were to be discharged by our adventurer. These arrangements occupied another hour, and then the consignee left the vessel, perfectly satisfied with the prudent and frugal manner in which he had discharged his duty toward his principal. Before stepping into the boat, however, with a view to be equally careful of his own interests, he took an opportunity to request the publican to make a proper and legal affidavit of all that he knew of his own knowledge concerning the officer just engaged. Honest Joram was liberal of his promises; but, as he saw no motive, now that all was so happily effected, for incurring useless risks, he contrived to evade their fulfillment; finding, no doubt, his apology for this breach of faith in the absolute poverty of his information, when the subject came to be duly considered in his own mind.

It is unnecessary to relate the bustle, the reparation of half-forgotten, and consequently neglected business, the duns, good wishes, injunctions to execute commissions in some distant port, and all the confused, and seemingly interminable, duties that crowd themselves into the last ten minutes that precede the sailing of a merchant-vessel, more especially if she is fortunate, or rather unfortunate, enough to have passengers. A certain class of men quit a vessel, in such a situation, with

the reluctance that they would part with any other well-established means of profit, creeping down her sides as lazily as the leech, filled to repletion, rolls from his bloody repast.

The common seaman, with an attention divided by the orders of the pilot and the adieus of acquaintances, runs in every direction but the right one; and perhaps at the only time in his life seems ignorant of the uses of the ropes he has so long been accustomed to handle. Notwithstanding all these vexatious delays and customary incumbrances, the *Royal Caroline* finally got rid of all her visitors but one; and Wilder was enabled to indulge in a pleasure that seamen alone can appreciate—that of clear decks and an orderly ship's company.

CHAPTER XII.

"Good: speak to the marines: fall to't rarely, or we run ourselves aground."—TEMPEST.

A GOOD deal of the day had been wasted during the time occupied by the scenes just related. The breeze had come in steady, but far from fresh. So soon, however, as Wilder found himself left without the molestation of idlers from the shore, and the busy interposition of the consignee, he cast his eyes about him, with the intention of immediately submitting the ship to its power. Sending for the pilot, he communicated his determination, and withdrew himself to a part of the deck whence he might take a proper survey of the materials of his new command, and where he might reflect on the unexpected and extraordinary situation in which he found himself.

The *Royal Caroline* was not entirely without pretensions to her lofty name. She was a vessel of that happy size in which comfort and convenience are equally consulted. The letter of the Rover affirmed she had a reputation for speed; and her young and intelligent commander saw, with great inward satisfaction, that she was not destitute of the means of enabling him to exhibit her properties.

A healthy, active, and skillful crew, justly proportioned spars, little top-hamper, and an excellent trim, with a superabundance of light sails, offered all the advantages his experience could suggest. His eye lighted as it glanced rapidly over these several particulars of his command, and his lips moved like those of a man who uttered inward gratulations, or who indulged in some vaunt, that propriety suggested should go no further than his own thoughts.

By this time the crew, under the orders of the pilot, were assembled at the windlass, and had commenced heaving-in upon the cable.

The labor was of a nature to exhibit their individual powers, as well as their collective force, to the greatest advantage. Their motion was simultaneous, quick, and full of muscle. The cry was clear and cheerful. As if to feel his influence, our adventurer lifted his own voice amid the song of the mariners, in one of those sudden and inspiring calls with which a sea-officer is wont to encourage his people. His utterance was deep, animated, and full of authority. The seamen started, like mettled coursers when they first hear the signal, each man casting a glance behind him, as if he would scan the qualities of his new superior. Wilder smiled, like one satisfied with his success; and, turning to pace the quarter-deck, he found himself once more confronted by the calm, considerate, but certainly astonished eye of Mrs. Wyllys.

"After the opinions you were pleased to express of this vessel," said the lady, in a manner of the coldest irony, "I did not expect to find you filling a place of so much responsibility here."

"You probably know, madam," returned the young mariner, "that a sad accident has happened to her master?"

"I do; and I had heard that another officer had been found temporarily to supply his place. Still, I should presume that, on reflection, you will not think it remarkable I am amazed in finding who this person is?"

"Perhaps you may have conceived, from our conversations, an unfavorable

opinion of my professional skill. I hope that on this head you will place your mind at ease; for——"

"You are doubtless a master of the art! It would seem, at least, that no trifling danger can deter you from seeking proper opportunities to display this knowledge. Are we to have the pleasure of your company during the whole passage, or do you leave us at the mouth of the port?"

"I am engaged to conduct the ship to the end of her voyage."

"We may then hope that the danger you either saw or imagined is lessened in your judgment, otherwise you would not be so ready to encounter it in our company."

"You do me injustice, madam," returned Wilder, with warmth, glancing his eye unconsciously toward the grave but attentive Gertrude; "there is no danger that I would not cheerfully encounter, to save you, or this young lady, from harm."

"Even this young lady must be sensible of so much chivalry!" Then, losing the constrained manner which she had hitherto maintained, in one more natural, and one far more in consonance with her usually mild and thoughtful mien, Mrs. Wyllys continued: "You have a powerful advocate, young man, in the unaccountable interest which I feel in your truth; an interest that my reason would condemn. As the ship must need your services, I will no longer detain you. Opportunities cannot be wanting to enable us to judge both of your inclination and ability to serve us. Gertrude, my love, females are usually considered as incumbrances in a vessel; more particularly when there is any delicate duty to perform like this before us."

Gertrude started, blushed, and followed her governess to the opposite side of the quarter-deck, though a look from our adventurer seemed to say that he considered her presence anything but an incumbrance. As the ladies took a position apart from everybody, and one where they were least in the way of working the ship, at the same time that they could command an entire view of her maneuvers, the disappointed sailor was obliged to cut short a communication which he would gladly have continued, until compelled to take the charge of the vessel from the hands of the pilot. By this time, however, the anchor was aweigh, and the seamen were actively engaged in the process of making sail. Wilder lent himself, with feverish excitement, to the duty; and taking the words from the officer who was issuing the orders, he assumed the immediate superintendence in person.

As sheet after sheet of canvas fell from the yards, and became distended by the complicated mechanism, the interest that a seaman seldom fails to take in his vessel began to gain the ascendency over all other feelings. By the time everything was set, from the royals down, and the ship was cast with her head toward the harbor's mouth, our adventurer had momentarily forgotten that he was a stranger among those he was in so extraordinary a manner selected to command, and how precious a stake was intrusted to his firmness and decision.

Everything being set to advantage, alow and aloft, and the ship brought close upon the wind, his eye scanned each yard and sail, from the truck to the hull, concluding by casting a glance along the outer side of the vessel, in order to see that not even the smallest rope was in the water to impede her progress. A small skiff, occupied by a boy, was towing under the lee, and as the mass of the vessel began to move, it was skipping along the surface of the water, light and buoyant as a feather. Perceiving it was a boat belonging to the shore, Wilder walked forward and demanded who was its owner. A mate pointed to Joram, who at that moment ascended from the interior of the vessel, where he had been settling the balance due from a delinquent, or, what was in his eyes the same thing, a departing debtor.

The sight of this man recalled Wilder to a recollection of all that had occurred that morning, and of the whole delicacy of the task he had undertaken to perform. But the publican, whose ideas appeared always concentrated when occupied on the subject

of gain, seemed troubled by no particular emotions at the interview. He approached the young mariner, and saluting him by the title of "Captain," wished him a good voyage, with the customary compliments which seamen express when about to separate on such an occasion.

"A lucky trip you have made of it, Captain Wilder," he concluded, "and I hope your passage will be short. You'll not be without a breeze this afternoon; and, by stretching well over toward Montauk, you will be able to make such an offing, on the other tack, as to run the coast down in the morning. If I am any judge of the weather, the wind will have more easting in it than you may happen to find to your fancy."

"And how long do you think my voyage is likely to last?" demanded Wilder, dropping his voice so low as to reach no ear but that of the publican.

Joram cast a furtive glance aside; perceiving that they were alone, he suffered an expression of hardened cunning to take possession of a countenance that ordinarily seemed set in dull, physical contentment, and laying a finger on his nose, he muttered:

"Didn't I tender the consignee a beautiful oath, Master Wilder?"

"You certainly exceeded my expectations with your promptitude, and——"

"Information!" added the landlord of the "Foul Anchor," perceiving the other a little at a loss for a word. "Yes, I have always been remarkable for the activity of my mind in these matters; but, when a man once knows a thing thoroughly, it is a great folly to spend his breath in words."

"It is certainly a great advantage to be thoroughly instructed. I suppose you improve your knowledge to a good account?"

"Ah! bless me, Master Wilder, what would become of us all, in these difficult times, if we did not turn an honest penny in every way that offers? I have brought up several fine children in credit, and it sha'n't be my fault if I don't leave them something, too, besides my good name. Well, well, they say 'A nimble sixpence is as good as a lazy shilling;' but give me the man who don't stand shilly-shally when a friend has need of his good word, or a lift from his hand. You always know where to find such a man, as our politicians say, after they have gone through thick and thin in the cause, be it right or be it wrong."

"Very commendable principles! and such as will surely be the means of exalting you in the world sooner or later! But you forgot to answer my question—Will the passage be long or short?"

"Heaven bless you, Master Wilder! Is it for a poor publican like me to tell the master of this noble ship which way the wind will blow next? There is the worthy and notable Commander Nichols, lying in his state-room below, he could do anything with the vessel; and why am I to expect that a gentleman so well recommended as yourself will do less? I expect to hear that you have made a famous run, and have done credit to the good word I have had occasion to say in your favor."

Wilder execrated, in his heart, the wary cunning of the rogue with whom he was compelled, for the moment, to be in league; for he saw plainly that a determination not to commit himself a little farther than he might conceive to be absolutely necessary, was likely to render Joram too circumspect to answer his own immediate wishes.

After hesitating a moment, to reflect, he continued, hastily—

"You see that the ship is gathering way too fast to admit of trifling. You know of the letter I received this morning?"

"Bless me, Captain Wilder! Do you take me for a postmaster? How should I know what letters arrive at Newport, and what stop on the main?"

"As timid a villain as he is thorough!" muttered the young mariner. "But this much you may surely say, am I to be followed immediately? or is it expected that I shall detain the ship in the offing, under any pretense that I can devise?"

"Heaven keep you, young gentleman! These are strange questions, coming from one who is fresh off the sea to a man that

has done no more than look at it from the land these five-and-twenty years. According to my memory, sir, you will keep your ship about south until you are clear of the islands; and then you must make your calculations according to the wind, in order not to get into the Gulf, where, you know, the stream will be setting you one way, while your orders say 'Go another.'"

"Luff! mind you luff, sir!" cried the pilot, in a reproving voice, to the man at the helm; "luff you can; on no account go to the leeward of the slaver!"

Wilder and the publican started, as if they both found something alarming in the proximity of the vessel just named; and the former pointed to the skiff, as he said—

"Unless you wish to go to sea with us, Mr. Joram, it is time your boat held its master."

"Aye, aye, I see you are fairly under way, and I must leave you, however much I like your company," returned the landlord of the "Foul Anchor," bustling over the side, and getting into his skiff in the best manner he could.

"Well, boys, a good time to ye; a plenty of wind, and of the right sort, a safe passage out, and a quick return. Cast off."

His order was obeyed; the light skiff, no longer impelled by the ship, immediately deviated from its course; and, after making a little circuit, it became stationary, while the mass of the vessel passed on with the steadiness of an elephant from whose back a butterfly had just taken its flight.

Wilder followed the boat with his eyes for a moment; but his thoughts were recalled by the voice of the pilot, who again called from the forward part of the ship:

"Let the light sails lift a little, boy; let them lift, I say: keep every inch you can, or you'll not weather the slaver. Luff, I say, sir; luff."

"The slaver!" muttered our adventurer, hastening to a part of the ship whence he could command a view of that important and, to him, doubly interesting ship; "aye, the slaver! it may be difficult, indeed, to weather upon the slaver!"

He had unconsciously placed himself near Wyllys and Gertrude, the latter of whom was leaning on the rail of the quarter-deck, regarding the strange vessel at anchor with a pleasure far from unnatural to her years.

"You may laugh at me, and call me fickle and perhaps credulous, dear Mrs. Wyllys," the unsuspecting girl said, just as Wilder took the position mentioned, "but I wish we were well out of this *Royal Caroline*, and that our passage was to be made in yonder beautiful ship!"

"It is indeed a beautiful ship!" returned Mrs. Wyllys; "but I know not that it would be safer, or more comfortable, than the one we are in."

"With what symmetry and order the ropes are arranged! and how like a bird it floats upon the water!"

"Had you particularized the duck, the comparison would have been nautical," said the governess, smiling mournfully; "you show capabilities, my love, to become one day a seaman's wife."

Gertrude blushed a little; and, turning back her head a little to answer in the playful vein of her governess, her eye met the look of Wilder fastened on herself. The color on her cheek deepened to carnation, and she was mute; the large gypsy hat she wore served to conceal both her face and the confusion which suffused it.

"You make no answer, child, as if you reflected seriously on the chances," continued Mrs. Wyllys, whose thoughtful and abstracted mien, however, proved she scarcely knew what she uttered.

"The sea is too unstable an element for my taste," Gertrude coldly answered. "Pray tell me, Mrs. Wyllys, if the vessel we are approaching is a king's ship? She has a warlike, not to say a threatening exterior."

"The pilot has twice called her a slaver."

"A slaver! How deceitful is all her beauty and symmetry! I will never trust to appearances again, since so lovely an

object can be devoted to so vile a purpose."

"Deceitful, indeed!" said Wilder aloud, under an impulse that he found as irresistible as it was involuntary. "I will take upon myself to say that a more treacherous vessel does not float the ocean than yonder finely proportioned and admirably equipped——"

"Slaver!" added Mrs. Wyllys, who had time to turn, and to look her astonishment, before the young man appeared disposed to finish his sentence.

"Slaver!" he said, with emphasis, bowing at the same time, as if to thank her for the word.

After this interruption there was a profound silence. Mrs. Wyllys studied the disturbed features of the young man for a moment, with a countenance that denoted a singular, though a complicated interest; and then she gravely bent her eyes on the water, deeply occupied with intense and painful reflection. The light, symmetrical form of Gertrude continued leaning on the rail, it is true, but Wilder was unable to catch another glimpse of her averted face. In the meanwhile, events, that were of a character to withdraw his attention from even so pleasant a study, were hastening to their accomplishment.

The ship, by this time, had passed between the little island and the point where Homespun embarked, and she might now be said to have fairly left the inner harbor. The slaver lay directly in her track, and every man in the vessel was watching with interest to see whether they would be able to pass her weather-beam. The measure was desirable, because a seaman has a pride in keeping on the honorable side of everything he encounters, but chiefly because, from the position of the stranger, it would be the means of preventing the necessity of tacking before the *Caroline* reached a point more advantageous for such a maneuver. The reader, will, however, readily understand that the interest of her new commander took its rise in feelings very different from professional pride or momentary convenience.

Wilder felt, in every nerve, the probability that a crisis was at hand. It will be remembered that he was profoundly ignorant of the immediate intentions of the *Rover*. As the fort was not in a state for service, it would not be difficult for the latter to seize upon its prey in open view of the townsmen, and bear it off, in contempt of their feeble means of defense. The position of the two ships was favorable to such an enterprise. Unprepared, and unsuspecting, the *Caroline*, at no time a match for her powerful adversary, must fall an easy victim; nor would there be much reason to apprehend that a single shot from the battery could reach them, before the captor and his prize would be at such a distance as to render the blow next to impotent, if not utterly innocuous. The wild and audacious character of such an enterprise was in accordance with the reputation of the desperate freebooter, on whose caprice, alone, the act now seemed solely to depend.

Under these impressions, and with the prospect of such a speedy termination to his new-born authority, it is not to be considered wonderful that our adventurer awaited the result with an interest greatly exceeding that of any of those by whom he was surrounded. He walked into the waist of the ship, and endeavored to read the plan of his secret confederates, by some of those indications that are familiar to a seaman.

Not the smallest sign of any intention to depart, or in any manner to change her position, was discoverable in the pretended slaver. She lay in the same deep, beautiful, but treacherous quiet, as that in which she had reposed throughout the whole of the eventful morning. But a solitary individual could be seen amid the mazes of her rigging, or along the wide reaches of her spars. It was a seaman seated on the extremity of a lower yard, where he appeared to busy himself with one of those repairs that are so constantly required in the gear of a ship. As the man was placed on the weather-side of his own vessel, Wilder instantly conceived the idea that he was thus stationed to cast a grapnel into the rigging of the *Caroline*, should such a measure become necessary, in order to bring the two ships foul of each

other. With the view to prevent so rude an encounter, he instantly determined to defeat the plan. Calling to the pilot, he told him to attempt to pass to windward was of very doubtful success, and reminded him that the safer way would be to go to leeward.

"No fear, no fear, Captain," returned the stubborn conductor of the ship, who, as his authority was so brief, was only the more jealous of its unrestrained exercise, and who, like the usurper of a throne, felt a jealousy of the more legitimate power which he had temporarily dispossessed; "no fear of me, Captain. I have trolled over this ground oftener than you have crossed the ocean, and I know the name of every rock on the bottom, as well as the town-crier knows the streets of Newport. Let her luff, boy; luff her into the eye of the wind; luff, you can——"

"You have the ship shivering as it is, sir; should you get us foul of the slaver, who is to pay the cost?"

"I am a general underwriter," returned the opinionated pilot; "my wife shall mend every hole I make in your sails with a needle no bigger than a hair, and with such a palm as a fairy's thimble!"

"This is fine talking, sir, but you are already losing the ship's way; and before you have ended your boasts she will be as fast in irons as a condemned thief. Keep the sails full, boy; keep them a rap full, sir."

"Aye, aye, keep her a good full," echoed the pilot, who, as the difficulty of passing to windward became more obvious, began to waver in his resolutions. "Keep her full-and-by—I have always told you full-and-by. I don't know, Captain, seeing that the wind has hauled a little, but we shall have to pass to leeward yet; you will acknowledge that in such case, we shall be obliged to go about."

Now, in point of fact, the wind, though a little lighter than it had been, was, if anything, a trifle more favorable; nor had Wilder ever, in any manner, denied that the ship would not have to tack some twenty minutes sooner, by going to leeward of the other vessel, than if she had succeeded in her delicate experiment of passing on the more honorable side; but, as the vulgarest minds are always the more reluctant to confess their blunders, the discomfited pilot was disposed to qualify the concession he found himself compelled to make, by some salvo of the sort, that he might not lessen his reputation for foresight among his auditors.

"Keep her away at once," cried Wilder, who was beginning to change the tones of remonstrance for those of command; "keep the ship away, sir, while you have room to do it, or, by the——"

His lips became motionless; for his eye happened to fall on the pale features of the frightened Gertrude.

"I believe it must be done, seeing that the wind is hauling. Hard up, boy, and run her under the stern of the ship at anchor. Hold! keep your luff again; eat into the wind to the bone, boy; lift again; let the light sails lift. The slaver has run a warp directly across our track. If there's law in the Plantations, I'll have her Captain before the courts before this!"

"What does the fellow mean?" demanded Wilder, jumping hastily on a gun to get a better view.

His mate pointed to the lee quarter of the other vessel, where, sure enough, a large rope was seen whipping the water, in the very process of being extended. The truth instantly flashed on the mind of our young mariner. The *Rover* lay secretly moored with a spring, with a view to bring his guns more readily to bear upon the battery should his defense become necessary, and he now profited by the circumstance, in order to prevent the trader from passing to leeward.

The whole arrangement excited a good deal of surprise, and not a few execrations among the officers of the, *Caroline* though none but her commander had the smallest twinkling of the real reason why the kedge had thus been laid, and why a warp was so awkwardly stretched across their path. Of the whole number, the pilot alone saw cause to rejoice in the circumstance. He had, in fact, got the ship in such a situation as to render it nearly as difficult to proceed in one way as in the other; and he was now furnished with a sufficient justi-

fication, should any accident occur, in the course of the exceedingly critical maneuver, from whose execution there was now no retreat.

"This is an extraordinary liberty to take in the mouth of a harbor," muttered Wilder, when his eyes put him in possession of the fact just related. "You must shove her by to windward, pilot; there is no remedy."

"I wash my hands of the consequences, as I call all on board to witness," returned the other, with an air of an offended man, though secretly glad of the appearance of being driven to the very measure he was a minute before so obstinately bent on executing. "Law must be called in here, if sticks are snapped or rigging parted. Luff to a hair, boy; luff her short into the wind, and try a half-board."

The man at the helm obeyed the order. Releasing his hold of its spokes the wheel made a quick evolution; and the ship, feeling a fresh impulse of the wind, turned her head heavily toward the quarter whence it came, the canvas fluttering with a noise like that produced by a flock of water-fowl taking wing. But, met by the helm again, she soon fell off as before, powerless from having lost her way, and settling bodily down toward the fancied slaver, impelled by the air, which seemed to have lost much of its force at the critical instant it was most needed.

The situation of the *Caroline* was one which a seaman will readily understand. She had forged so far ahead as to lie directly on the weather-beam of the stranger, but too near to enable her to fall-off in the least, without imminent danger that the vessels would fall foul of each other. The wind was inconstant, sometimes blowing in puffs, while at moments there was a lull. As the ship felt the former, her tall masts bent gracefully toward the slaver, as if to make the parting salute; but, relieved from the momentary pressure of the inconstant air, she as often rolled heavily to windward without advancing a foot. The effect of each change, however, was to bring her still nigher to her dangerous neighbor, until it became evident, to the judgment of the youngest seaman in the vessel, that nothing but a sudden shift of wind could enable her to pass ahead, the more especially as the tide was on the change.

The inferior officers of the *Caroline* were not delicate in making their comments on the dullness which had brought them into so awkward and so mortifying a position, and the pilot endeavored to conceal his vexation, by the number and vociferousness of his orders. From blustering, he soon passed into confusion, until the men themselves stood idle, not knowing which of the uncertain and contradictory mandates ought to be obeyed. In the meantime, Wilder had folded his arms with an appearance of entire composure, and taken his station near his female passengers. Mrs. Wyllys studied his eye, with the wish of ascertaining by its expression the nature and extent of their danger, if danger there might be in the approaching collision of two ships in water that was perfectly smooth, and where one was stationary, and the motion of the other scarcely perceptible. The stern, determined look she saw settling about the brow of the young man, excited an uneasiness that she would not otherwise have felt, under circumstances that, in themselves, bore no very vivid appearance of hazard.

"Have we aught to apprehend, sir?" demanded the governess, endeavoring to conceal from her charge the nature of her own disquietude.

"I told you, madam, the *Caroline* would prove an unlucky ship."

Both females regarded the peculiarly bitter smile with which Wilder made this reply as an evil omen, and Gertrude clung to her companion as to one on whom she had long been accustomed to lean.

"Why do not the mariners of the slaver appear to assist us—to keep us from coming too nigh?" anxiously demanded the latter.

"Why do they not, indeed! we shall see them, I think, ere long."

"You speak and look, young man, as if

you thought there would be danger in the interview!"

"Keep near to me," returned Wilder, in a voice that was nearly smothered by the manner in which he compressed his lips. "In every event, keep as nigh my person as possible."

"Haul the spanker-boom to windward," shouted the pilot; "lower away the boats, and tow the ship's head round—clear away the stream anchor—aft jib sheet—board main tack, again."

The astonished men stood like statues, not knowing whither to turn, some calling to the rest to do this or that, and some as loudly countermanding the order, when an authoritative voice was heard calmly to say:

"Silence in the ship!"

The tones were of that sort which, while they denote the self-possession of the speaker, never fail to inspire the inferior with a portion of the confidence of him who commands. Every face was turned toward the quarter of the vessel whence the sound proceeded, each ear ready to catch the smallest additional mandate. Wilder was standing on the head of the capstan, where he could command a full view on every side of him. With a quick and understanding glance, he had made himself a perfect master of the situation of his ship. His eye was at the instant fixed anxiously on the slaver, to pierce the treacherous calm which still reigned on all about her, in order to know how far his exertions might be permitted to be useful. But it appeared as if the stranger lay like some enchanted vessel on the water, not a human form appearing about her complicated machinery, except the seaman already named, who still continued his employment, with as much indifference as if the *Caroline* were a hundred miles from the place where he sat. The lips of Wilder moved, whether in bitterness or in satisfaction it would be difficult to say, and he motioned to the attentive crew to be quick.

"Throw all aback—lay everything flat to the masts, forward and aft," he said.

"Aye!" echoed the pilot, "lay everything flat to the masts."

"Is there a shore-boat alongside the ship?" demanded our adventurer.

The answer from a dozen voices was in the affirmative.

"Show that pilot into her."

"This is an unlawful order," exclaimed the other; "I forbid any voice but mine to be obeyed."

"*Throw* him in!" repeated Wilder.

Amid the bustle and exertion of bracing round the yards, the resistance of the pilot produced little sensation. He was raised on the extended arms of the two mates, and after exhibiting his limbs in sundry contortions in the air, he was dropped into the boat with as little ceremony as a billet of wood. The end of the painter was cast after him; and the discomfited guide was left, with singular indifference, to his own meditations.

In the meantime the order of Wilder was executed. Those vast sheets of canvas which, a moment before, had been either fluttering in the air, or were bellying inward or outward as they touched or filled, as it is technically called, were now pressing against their respective masts, impelling the vessel to retrace her mistaken path. The maneuver required the utmost attention, and the nicest delicacy in its direction. But her young commander proved himself, in every particular, competent to the task. Here, a sail was lifted; there, another was brought with a flatter surface to the air; now, the lighter canvas was spread; and now it disappeared, like thin vapor dispelled by the sun. The voice of Wilder throughout, though calm, was breathing with authority. The ship itself seemed, like an animated being, conscious that her destinies were reposed in different and more intelligent hands than before.

Obedient to the new impulse they had received, the immense clouds of canvas, with the tall forest of spars and rigging, rolled to and fro; and then, having overcome its state of rest, the vessel heavily yielded to the pressure and began to recede.

Throughout the whole of the time necessary to extricate the *Caroline*, the attention of Wilder was divided between his

own ship and his own inexplicable neighbor. Not a sound was heard to issue from the imposing stillness of the latter. Not a single anxious countenance, not even one lurking eye, was to be detected, at any of the numerous outlets by which the inmates of an armed vessel can look abroad upon the deep. The seaman on the yard continued his labor, like a man unconscious of anything but his own employment. There was, however, a slow, though nearly imperceptible motion in the ship itself, which was apparently made, like the lazy movement of a slumbering whale, more by listless volition, than through any agency of human hands.

Not the smallest of these changes escaped the keen examination of Wilder. He saw, that as his own ship retired, the side of the slaver was gradually exposed to the *Caroline*. The muzzles of the threatening guns gaped constantly on his vessel, as the eye of the crouching tiger follows the movements of its prey; and at no time, while nearest, did there exist a single instant that the decks of the latter ship could not have been swept by a general discharge from the battery of the former. As each successive order issued from his own lips, our adventurer turned his eye with increasing interest to ascertain whether he would be permitted to execute it; and never did he feel certain that he was left to the sole management of the *Caroline*, until he found that she had backed from her dangerous proximity to the other, and that, obedient to a new disposition of her sails, she was falling off before the light air, in a place where he could hold her entirely at command.

Finding that the tide was getting unfavorable, and the wind too light to stem it, the sails were drawn to the yards and an anchor was dropped.

CHAPTER XIII.

"What have we here? A man or a fish?"
—THE TEMPEST.

THE *Caroline* now lay within a cable's length of the supposed slaver. In dismissing the pilot, Wilder had assumed the responsibility from which a seaman usually shrinks; since, in the case of any untoward accident in leaving the port it would involve a loss of insurance, and his own probable punishment. How far he had been influenced in taking so decided a step, by a knowledge of his being beyond or above the reach of law, will be made manifest in the course of the narrative; the only immediate effect of the measure was, to draw the whole of his attention, which had before been so much divided between his passengers and the ship, to the care of the latter. But so soon as his vessel was secured for a time at least, and his mind was no longer excited by the expectation of a scene of immediate violence, our adventurer found leisure to return to his former occupation. The success of his delicate maneuver had imparted to his countenance a glow of something like triumph, and his step, as he advanced toward Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude, was that of a man who enjoyed the consciousness of having acquitted himself dexterously in circumstances that required no small exhibition of professional skill. At least such was the construction the former lady put upon his kindling eye and exulting air; though the latter might possibly be disposed to judge of his motives with greater indulgence. Both, however, were ignorant of the true reasons of his self-felicitation, for a sentiment more generous than either of them could imagine had a full share in his present feelings.

Let the cause of his exultation be what it would, Wilder no sooner saw the *Caroline* swinging to her anchor, and that his services were of no farther immediate use, than he sought an opportunity to renew a conversation which had hitherto been so vague and so often interrupted. Mrs. Wyllys had been viewing the neighboring vessel with a steady look; nor did she now turn her gaze from the motionless and silent object, until the young mariner was near her person. She was then the first to speak.

"Yonder vessel must possess an extraordinary, not to say an insensible crew!"

exclaimed the governess, in a tone bordering on astonishment. "If such things were, it would not be difficult to fancy her a specter ship."

"She is truly an admirably proportioned and a beautifully equipped trader!"

"Did my apprehension deceive me? or were we in actual danger of getting the two vessels entangled?"

"There was certainly some reason for apprehension; but we are now safe."

"For which we have to thank your skill. The manner in which you have just extricated us from the late danger has a direct tendency to contradict all that you have foretold of that which is to come."

"I well know that my conduct may bear an unfavorable construction, but——"

"You thought it no harm to laugh at the weakness of three credulous females," resumed Mrs. Wyllys, smiling. "You have had your amusement, and now, I hope, you will be more disposed to pity what is said to be a natural infirmity of woman's mind."

The governess glanced her eye at Gertrude, with an expression that seemed to say it would be cruel to trifle further with the apprehensions of one so innocent and so young. The look of Wilder followed her own; and he answered with a sincerity that was well calculated to carry conviction:

"On the faith which a gentleman owes to all of your sex, madam, what I have already told you I continue to believe."

"The gammonings and the top-gallant masts!"

"No, no," interrupted the young mariner, slightly laughing, and at the same time coloring a good deal; "perhaps not all of that. But neither mother, wife nor sister of mine should make this passage in the *Royal Caroline*."

"Your look, your voice, and your air of good faith, form a strange contradiction to your words, young man; for, while the former almost tempt me to believe you honest, the latter have not a shade of reason to support them. Perhaps I ought to be ashamed of such a weakness, and yet I will acknowledge that the mysterious quiet which seems to have settled forever on yonder ship, has excited an inexplicable uneasiness, that may in some way be connected with her character. She is certainly a slaver?"

"She is certainly beautiful!" exclaimed Gertrude.

"Very beautiful!" Wilder rejoined.

"There is a man still seated on one of her yards, who appears to be entranced in his occupation," continued Mrs. Wyllys, leaning her chin thoughtfully on a hand, as she gazed at the object of which she was speaking. "Not once, during the time we were in so much danger of getting the ships entangled, did that seaman bestow so much as a stolen glance toward us. He resembles the solitary individual in the city of the transformed; for not another mortal is there to keep him company, so far as we may discover."

"Perhaps his comrades sleep," said Gertrude.

"Sleep! Mariners do not sleep in an hour and a day like this! Tell me, Mr. Wilder (you that are a seaman should know), is it usual for the crew to sleep when a strange vessel is so nigh—near even to touching, I might almost say?"

"It is not."

"I thought as much; for I am not an entire novice in matters of your daring, your hardy, your *noble* profession!" returned the governess with emphasis. "Had we gone foul of the slaver, do you think her crew would have maintained their apathy?"

"I think not."

"There is something in all this assumed tranquillity which might induce one to suspect the worst. Is it known that any of her crew have had communication with the town since her arrival?"

"It is."

"I have heard that false colors have been seen on the coast, and that ships have been plundered, and their people and passengers maltreated, during the past summer. It is even thought that the famous Rover has tired of his excesses on the Spanish main, and that a vessel was not long since seen in the Caribbean Sea, which was thought to be the cruiser of that desperate pirate!"

Wilder made no reply. His eyes, which had been fastened steadily, though respectfully, on those of the speaker, fell to the deck, and he appeared to await her farther pleasure. The governess mused a moment; and then with a change in the expression of her countenance which proved that her suspicion of the truth was too light to continue without farther and better confirmation, she added—

"After all, the occupation of a slaver is bad enough, and, unhappily, by far too probable, to render it necessary to attribute any worse character to the stranger. I would I knew the motives of your singular assertions, Mr. Wilder?"

"I cannot better explain them, madam: unless my manner produces its effect, I fail altogether in my intentions, which at least are sincere."

"Is not the risk lessened by your presence?"

"Lessened, but not removed."

Until now, Gertrude had rather listened, as if unavoidably, than seeming to make one of the party. But here she turned quickly, and perhaps a little impatiently, to Wilder, and while her cheeks glowed, she demanded, with a smile that might have brought even a more obdurate man to his confession—

"Is it forbidden to be more explicit?"

The young commander hesitated, perhaps as much to dwell upon the ingenuous features of the speaker, as to decide upon his answer. The color mounted into his embrowned cheek, and his eye lighted with a gleam of pleasure; then, suddenly reminded that he was delaying to reply, he said—

"I am certain, that in relying on your discretion, I shall be safe."

"Doubt not," returned Mrs. Wyllys. "In no event shall you ever be betrayed."

"Betrayed! For myself, madam, I have little fear. If you suspect me of personal apprehension, you do me great injustice."

"We suspect you of nothing unworthy," said Gertrude, hastily; "but—we are very anxious for ourselves."

"Then will I relieve your uneasiness, though at the expense of——"

A call, from one of the mates to the other, arrested his words for the moment, and drew his attention to the other ship.

"The slaver's people have just found out that their ship is not made to put in a glass case, to be looked at by women and children," cried the speaker, in tones loud enough to send his words into the fore-top, where the messmate he addressed was attending to some especial duty.

"Aye, aye," was the answer; "seeing us in motion has put him in mind of his next voyage. They keep watch aboard the fellow, like the sun in Greenland; six months on deck, and six months below!"

The witticism produced, as usual, a laugh among the seamen, who continued their remarks in a similar vein but in tones more suited to the deference due their superiors.

The eyes of Wilder, however, had fastened on the other ship. The man so long seated on the end of the mainyard had disappeared, and another sailor was deliberately walking along the opposite quarter of the same spar, steadying himself by the boom, and holding in one hand the end of a rope, which he was apparently about to reeve in the place where it properly belonged. The first glance told Wilder that the latter was Fid, who was so far recovered from his debauch as to tread the giddy height with as much, if not greater, steadiness than he would have rolled along the ground, had his duty called him to *terra firma*. The countenance of the young man, which, an instant before, had been flushed with excitement, and which was beaming with the pleasure of an opening confidence, changed directly to a look of gloom and reserve.

Mrs. Wyllys, who had lost no shade of the varying expression of his face, resumed the discourse with some earnestness, where he had seen fit so abruptly to break it off.

"You would relieve us," she said, "at the expense of——"

"Life, madam; but not of honor."

"Gertrude, we can now retire to our cabin," observed Mrs. Wyllys, with an air of cold displeasure, in which disappointment was a good deal mingled with

resentment at the trifling of which she believed herself the subject. The eye of Gertrude was no less averted and distant than that of her governess, while the tint that gave luster to its beam was brighter, if not quite so resentful. As they moved past the silent Wilder, each dropped a distant salute, and then our adventurer found himself the sole occupant of the quarter-deck. While his crew was busied in coiling ropes, and clearing the decks, their young commander leaned his head on the taffrail (that part of the vessel which the good relict of the Rear-Admiral had so strangely confounded with a very different object in the other end of the ship), remaining for many minutes in an attitude of abstraction. From this reverie he was at length aroused, by a sound like that produced by the lifting and falling of a light oar into the water.

Believing himself about to be annoyed by visitors from the land, he raised his head, casting a dissatisfied glance over the vessel's side, to see who was approaching.

A light skiff, such as is commonly used by fishermen in the bays and shallow waters of America, was lying within ten feet of the ship, and in a position where it was necessary to take some little pains in order to observe it.

It was occupied by a single man, whose back was toward the vessel, and who was apparently abroad on the ordinary business of the owner of such a boat.

"Are you in search of rudder-fish, my friend, that you hang so closely under my counter?" demanded Wilder. "The bay is said to be full of delicious bass and other scaly gentlemen, that would far better repay your trouble."

"He is well paid who gets the bite he baits for," returned the other, turning his head, and exhibiting the cunning eye and chuckling countenance of old Bob Blunt, as Wilder's recent and treacherous confederate had announced his name to be.

"How now! Dare you trust yourself with me, in five fathom water, after the villainous trick you have seen fit——"

"Hist! noble Captain, hist!" interrupted Bob, holding up a finger, to repress the other's animation, and intimating, by sign, that their conference must be held in lower tones; "there is no need to call all hands to help us through a little chat. In what way have I fallen to leeward in your favor, Captain?"

"In what way, sirrah? Did you not receive money to give such a character of this ship to the ladies as (you said yourself) would make them sooner pass the night in a churchyard, than trust foot on board her?"

"Something of the sort passed between us, Captain; but you forget one-half of the conditions, and I overlooked the other; I need not tell so expert a navigator, that two halves make a whole. No wonder, therefore, that the affair dropped through between us."

"How! Do you add falsehood to perfidy? What part of my engagement did I neglect?"

"What part!" returned the pretended fisherman, leisurely drawing in a line, which the quick eye of Wilder saw, though abundantly provided with lead at the end, was destitute of the equally material implement, the hook; "what part, Captain? No less a particular than the second guinea."

"It was to have been the reward of a service done, and not an earnest, like its fellow, to induce you to undertake the duty."

"Ah! you have helped me to the very word I wanted. I fancied it was not in earnest like the one I got, and so I left the job half finished."

"Half finished, scoundrel! you never commenced what you swore so stoutly to perform."

"Now are you on as wrong a course, my master, as if you steered due east to get to the pole. I religiously performed one half of my undertaking; and, you will acknowledge, I was only half paid."

"You would find it difficult to prove that you even did that little."

"Let us look into the log. I enlisted to walk up the hill as far as the dwelling of the good Admiral's widow, and there to make certain alterations in my sentiments, which it is not necessary to speak of between us."

"Which you did not make; but, on the contrary, which you thwarted, by telling an exactly contradictory tale."

"True."

"True, knave! Were justice done you, an acquaintance with the rope's end would be your reward."

"A squall of words! If your ship steer as wild as your ideas, Captain, you will have a crooked passage to the south. Do you think it an easier matter for an old man like me to tell a few lies, than to climb yonder long and heavy hill? In strict justice, more than half my duty was done when I got into the presence of the believing widow; and then I concluded to refuse half the reward that was unpaid, and to take bounty from t'other side."

"Villain!" exclaimed Wilder, a little blinded by resentment, "even your years shall no longer protect you. Forward, there! send a crew into the jolly boat, sir, and bring me this old fellow in the skiff on board the ship. Pay no attention to his outcries; I have an account to settle with him that cannot be balanced without a little noise."

The mate, to whom this order was addressed, and who had answered the hail, jumped on the rail where he got sight of the craft he was commanded to chase. In less than a minute he was in the boat, with four men, and pulling round the bows of the ship, in order to get on the side necessary to effect his object. The self-styled Bob Blunt gave one or two strokes with his sculls, and sent the skiff some twenty or thirty fathoms off, where he lay, chuckling like a man who saw only the success of his cunning, without any apparent apprehensions of the consequences. But the moment the boat appeared in view, he laid himself to the work with vigorous arms, and soon convinced the spectators that his capture was not easily to be achieved.

For some little time it was doubtful what course the fugitive meant to take; for he kept whirling and turning in swift and sudden circles, completely confusing and baffling his pursuers by his skillful and light evolutions. But, tiring of this amusement, or perhaps apprehensive of exhausting his own strength, which was powerfully and most dexterously exerted, it was not long before he darted on in a perfectly straight line, taking the direction of the *Rover*.

The chase now grew hot and earnest, exciting the clamor and applause of most of the nautical spectators. The result, for a time, seemed doubtful; but, if anything, the jolly boat, though some distance astern, began to gain as it gradually overcame the resistance of the water. In a few minutes, however, the skiff shot under the stern of the other ship, and disappeared, bringing the hull of the vessel in a line with the *Caroline* and its course. The pursuers were not long in taking the same direction; and then the seamen of the latter ship began, laughingly, to climb the rigging, in order to command a view of the intervening object.

Nothing, however, was to be seen beyond but water, and the still more distant island with its little fort. In a few minutes the crew of the jolly boat were observed pulling back in their path, returning slowly like men who were disappointed. All crowded to the side of the ship in order to hear the termination of the adventure, the noisy assemblage even drawing the two passengers from the cabin to the deck. Instead, however, of meeting the questions of their shipmates with the usual wordy narrative of men of their condition, the crew of the boat were silent and perplexed. Their officer sprang to the deck without speaking, and he immediately sought his commander.

"The skiff was too light for you, Mr. Knighthead," Wilder calmly observed as the other approached, having never moved himself from the place where he had been standing during the whole proceeding.

"Too light, sir! Are you acquainted with the man who pulled it?"

"Not particularly well; I only know him for a knave."

"He should be one, since he is of the family of the devil!"

"I will not take on myself to say he is as bad as you appear to think, though I have little reason to believe he has any

honesty to cast into the sea. What has become of him?"

"A question easily asked, but hard to answer. In the first place, though an old and gray-headed fellow, he twitched his skiff along as if it floated in air. We were not a minute, or two at the most, behind him; but, when we got on the other side of the slaver, boat and man had vanished!"

"He doubled her bows while you were crossing the stern."

"Did you see him, then?"

"I confess we did not."

"It could not be, sir; since we pulled far enough ahead to examine on both sides at once; besides, the people of the slaver knew nothing of him."

"You saw the slaver's people?"

"I should have said her man; for there is seemingly but one man on board her."

"And how was he employed?"

"He was seated in the chains, and seemed to have been asleep. It is a lazy ship, sir; and one that takes more money from her owners, I fancy, than it ever returns!"

"It may be so. Well, let the rogue escape. There is a prospect of a breeze coming in from the sea, Mr. Earing; we will get our topsails to the mastheads again, and be in readiness for it. I could like yet to see the sun set in the water."

The mates and the crew went cheerfully to their task, though many a curious question was asked by the wondering seamen of their shipmates who had been in the boat, and many a solemn answer was given, while they were again spreading the canvas to invite the breeze. Wilder turned, in the meantime, to Mrs. Wyllys, who had been an auditor of his short conversation with the mate.

"You perceive, madam," he said, "that our voyage does not commence without its omens."

"When you tell me, inexplicable young man, with the air of singular sincerity you sometimes possess, that we are unwise in trusting to the ocean, I am half inclined to put faith in what you say; but when you attempt to enforce your advice with the machinery of witchcraft, you only induce me to proceed."

"Man the windlass!" cried Wilder, with a look that seemed to tell his companions: if you are so stout of heart, the opportunity to show your resolution shall not be wanting. "Man the windlass there! We will try the breeze again, and work the ship into the offing while there is light."

The clatter of handspikes preceded the mariner's song. Then the heavy labor by which the ponderous iron was lifted from the bottom, was again resumed, and, in a few more minutes, the ship was once more released from her hold upon the land.

The wind soon came fresh off the ocean, charged with the saline dampness of the element. As the air fell upon the distended and balanced sails, the ship bowed to the welcome guest; and then, rising gracefully from its low inclination, the breeze was heard singing, through the maze of rigging, the music that is so grateful to a seaman's ear. The welcome sounds and the freshness of the peculiar air gave additional energy to the movements of the men. The anchor was stowed, the ship cast, the lighter sails set, the courses had fallen, and the bows of the *Caroline* were throwing the spray before her, ere ten minutes more had gone by.

Wilder had now undertaken the task of running his vessel between the islands of Canonicut and Rhode. Fortunately for the heavy responsibility he had assumed, the channel was not difficult, and the wind had veered so far to the east as to give him a favorable opportunity, after making a short stretch to windward, of laying through in a single reach. But this stretch would bring him under the necessity of passing very near the *Rover*, or of losing no small portion of his vantage ground. He did not hesitate. When the vessel was as nigh the weather shore as his busy lead told him was prudent, the ship was tacked, and her head laid directly toward the still motionless and seemingly unobservant slaver.

The approach of the *Caroline* was more

propitious than before. The wind was steady, and her crew held her in hand, as a skillful rider governs the actions of a fiery and mettled steed.

Still the passage was not made without exciting a breathless interest in every soul in the Bristol trader. Each individual had his own secret cause of curiosity. To the seamen the strange ship began to be the subject of wonder; the governess and her ward scarce knew the reasons of their interest; while Wilder was but too well instructed in the nature of the hazard that all but himself were running. As before, the man at the wheel was about to indulge his nautical pride by going to windward; but, although the experiment would now have been attended with no hazard, he was commanded to proceed differently.

"Pass the slaver's lee-beam, sir," said Wilder with a gesture of authority; and then the young Captain went himself to lean on the weather rail, like every other idler on board, to examine the object they were so fast approaching. As the *Caroline* came boldly up, seeming to bear the breeze before her, the sighing of the wind, as it murmured through the rigging of the stranger, was the only sound that issued from her. Not a single human face, not even a secret and curious eye, was anywhere to be seen. The passage was rapid; and, as the two vessels lay with heads and sterns nearly in a line, Wilder thought it was to be made without the slightest notice from the imaginary slaver. He was mistaken. A light, active form, in the undress attire of a naval officer, sprang upon the taffrail, and waved a sea-cap in salute. The instant the fair hair was blowing about the countenance of this individual, Wilder recognized the features of the Rover.

"Think you the wind will hold here, sir," shouted the latter, at the top of his voice.

"It has come in fresh enough to be steady," was the answer.

"A wise mariner would get his offing in time; to me there is a smack of West Indies about it."

"You believe we shall have it more at south?"

"I do; but a taut bow-line for the night will carry you clear."

By this time the *Caroline* had swept by, and she was now luffing, across the slaver's bows, into her course again. The figure on the taffrail waved the sea-cap in adieu, and disappeared.

"Is it possible that such a man can traffic in human beings?" exclaimed Gertrude, when the sounds of both voices had ceased.

Receiving no reply she turned to regard her companion. The governess was standing like one entranced, her eyes looking on vacancy. They had not changed their direction since the motion of the vessel had carried her beyond the view of the countenance of the stranger. Gertrude took her hand, and repeated the question, when the recollection of Mrs. Wyllys returned. Passing her hand over her brow, with a bewildered air, she forced a smile, as she said:

"The meeting of vessels, or the renewal of any maritime experience, never fails to revive my earliest recollections, love. But surely that was an extraordinary being, who has at length shown himself in the slaver!"

"For a slaver, most extraordinary!"

Mrs. Wyllys leaned her head on a hand for an instant, and then turned to look for Wilder. The young man was standing near, watching the expression of her countenance, with an interest scarcely less remarkable than her own air of thought.

"Tell me, young man, is yonder individual the commander of the slaver?"

"He is."

"You know him?"

"We have met."

"And he is called——"

"The master of yon ship. I know no other name."

"Gertrude, we will seek our cabin. When we are quitting the land, Mr. Wilder will have the goodness to let us know."

The latter bowed his assent, and the ladies left the deck. The *Caroline* had now the prospect of getting speedily to sea. In order to effect this object, Wilder had everything that would draw

set to the utmost advantage. One hundred times, at least, however, did he turn his head, to steal a look at the vessel he left behind. She lay as when they passed —a regular, beautiful, but motionless object in the bay. From each of these furtive examinations, our adventurer invariably cast an excited and impatient glance at the sails of his own ship; ordering this to be drawn tighter to the spar beneath, or that to be more distended along its mast.

The effect of so much solicitude, united with so much skill, was to urge the Bristol trader through her element at a rate she had rarely, if ever surpassed. It was not long before the land ceased to be seen on her two beams, and then it was only to be traced in the blue islands in their rear, or in a long, dim horizon, to the north and west, where the vast continent stretched for countless leagues. The passengers were now summoned to take their parting look at the land, and the officers were seen noting their departures. Just before the day shut in, and ere the islands were entirely sunk into the waves, Wilder ascended to an upper yard bearing a glass. His gaze toward the haven he had left was long, anxious and occupied. But his descent was distinguished by a more quiet eye, and a calmer mien. A smile, that of success, played about his lips; and he gave his orders clearly, and in a more cheerful voice. They were obeyed as briskly. The elder mariners pointed to the seas, as they cut through them, and affirmed that the *Caroline* had never made such progress. The mates cast the log, and nodded their approbation, as one announced to the other the unusual speed of the ship. In short, content and hilarity reigned on board; for it was thought that the passage was commenced under favorable auspices, and there was the hope of a speedy and prosperous termination of the run. In the midst of these encouraging omens, the sun dipped into the sea, illuminating, as it fell, a wide reach of the chill and gloomy element. Then the shades of night gathered over the illimitable waste.

CHAPTER XIV.

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen."
—MACBETH.

THE first watch of the night brought no change. Wilder had joined his passengers, cheerful, and with that air of enjoyment which every officer of the sea is apt to exhibit, when he has disengaged his vessel from the land, and has fairly launched her on the trackless and fathomless abyss of the ocean. He no longer alluded to the hazards of the passage, but strove, by the thousand nameless assiduities which his station enabled him to manifest, to expel all recollection of what had passed from their minds. Mrs. Wyllys lent herself to his evident efforts to remove their apprehensions, and one ignorant of what had occurred between them would have thought that the little party around the evening's repast was a contented and unsuspecting group of voyagers, who had commenced their enterprise under the happiest auguries.

Still there was that in the thoughtful eye and clouded brow of the governess, as at times she turned her bewildered look on our adventurer, which denoted a mind far from being at ease. She listened to the gay and peculiar, because professional, sallies of the young mariner, with smiles that were indulgent while they were melancholy, as if his youthful spirits, enlivened by touches of a humor that was thoroughly and quaintly nautical, recalled familiar but sad images to her fancy. Gertrude had less alloy in her pleasure. Home, and a beloved and indulgent father were before her; and she felt, while the ship yielded to each fresh impulse of the wind, as if another of those weary miles, which had so long separated them, was passed.

During these short but pleasant hours, the mariner who had been so oddly called to the command of the Bristol trader appeared in a new character. Though his conversation was characterized by the frank manliness of a seaman, it was nevertheless tempered by the delicacy of one whose breeding had not been neglected. The beautiful mouth of Gertrude often struggled to conceal the smiles which dim-

pled her cheeks at his sallies, like a soft air ruffling the surface of some limpid spring; and once or twice, when the humor of Wilder came unexpectedly, and in stronger colors than common, across her youthful fancy, she yielded to an irresistible merriment.

One hour of the free intercourse of a ship can do more toward softening the cold exterior in which the world incrusts the best of human feelings, than weeks of the unmeaning ceremonies of the land. He who has not felt this truth, would do well to distrust his own companionable qualities. It would seem that man, when he finds himself in the solitude of the ocean, most feels his dependency on others for happiness. He yields to sentiments with which he trifled in the wantonness of security, and is glad to seek relief in the sympathies of his kind. A community of hazard makes a community of interest, whether person or property composes the stake. Perhaps a literal reasoner might add that, as each is conscious the condition and fortunes of his neighbor are the indexes of his own, they acquire value from their affinity to self. If this conclusion be true, Providence has happily so constituted some of the species, that the sordid feeling is too latent to be discovered; and least of all was any one of the three, who passed the first hours of the night around the cabin table of the *Royal Caroline*, to be included in this selfish class. The nature of the intercourse which had rendered the first hours of their acquaintance so singularly equivocal, appeared to be forgotten in the freedom of the moment; or, if it were remembered at all, merely served to give the young seaman additional interest in the eyes of the females, as much by the mystery of the circumstances, as by the concern he had manifested in their behalf.

The bell had struck eight; and the hoarse call was heard which summoned another set of watchers to the deck, before the party was aware of the lateness of the hour.

"It is the middle-watch," said Wilder, smiling, when he observed that Gertrude started at the strange sounds, listening like a timid doe that catches the note of the hunter's horn. "We seamen are not always musical, as you may judge by the strains of the present spokesman. There are, however, ears in the ship to whom his notes are even more discordant than to your own."

"You mean the sleepers?" said Mrs. Wyllys.

"I mean the watch below. There is nothing so sweet to the foremast mariner as his sleep; for it is the most precarious of all his enjoyments; on the other hand, perhaps, it is the most treacherous companion the commander knows."

"And why is the rest of the superior so much less grateful than that of the common man?"

"Because he pillows his head on responsibility."

"You are young, Mr. Wilder, for a trust like this you bear."

"It is a service which makes all prematurely old."

"Then why not quit it?" said Gertrude, a little hastily.

"Quit it!" he replied, gazing at her intently, while he suspended his reply. "It would be like quitting the air I breathe."

"Have you so long been devoted to your profession?" resumed Mrs. Wyllys, bending her thoughtful eye from the ingenuous countenance of her pupil, once more toward the features of the young man.

"I have reason to think I was born on the sea."

"Think? You surely know your birthplace?"

"We are all of us dependent on the testimony of others," said Wilder, smiling, "for the account of that important event. My earliest recollections are blended with the sight of the ocean, and I can hardly say that I am a creature of the land at all."

"You have, at least, been fortunate in those who have had the charge of your education and of your younger days."

"I have!" he answered with emphasis. Then shading his face an instant with his hands, he arose, and added, with a melancholy smile, "And now to my last duty

for the twenty-four hours. Have you a disposition to look at the night? So skillful and so stout a sailor should not seek her berth, without passing an opinion on the weather."

The governess took his arm, and they ascended the stairs of the cabin in silence, each finding sufficient employment in meditation. She was followed by the more active Gertrude, who joined them on the weather side of the quarter-deck.

The night was misty rather than dark. A full and bright moon had arisen; but it pursued its path through the heavens behind a body of dusky clouds, that was much too dense for the borrowed rays to penetrate. Here and there a straggling gleam appeared to find its way through a covering of vapor less dense than the rest, falling upon the water like the dim illumination of a distant taper. As the wind was fresh and easterly, the sea seemed to throw upward from its agitated surface more light than it received; long lines of glittering foam following each other, and lending a distinctness to the waters that the heavens themselves wanted. The ship was bowed low on its side; and, as it entered each rolling swell, a wide crescent of foam was driven ahead, the element appearing to gambol along its path. But, though the time was propitious, the wind not absolutely adverse, and the heavens rather gloomy than threatening, an uncertain (and, to a landsman, it might seem an unnatural) light gave a character of the wildest loneliness to the view.

Gertrude shuddered on reaching the deck, while she murmured an expression of strange delight. Even Mrs. Wyllys gazed upon the dark waves, that were heaving and setting in the horizon, around which was shed most of that radiance that seemed so supernatural, with a deep conviction that she was now entirely in the hands of the Being who had created the waters and the land. But Wilder looked upon the scene as one fastens his gaze on a placid sky. To him the view possessed neither novelty, nor dread, nor charm. Not so with his more youthful and enthusiastic companion. After the first sensations of awe had a little subsided, she exclaimed, in the ardor of admiration—

"One such night would repay a month of imprisonment in a ship! You must find great enjoyment in these scenes, Mr. Wilder; you, who have them always at command."

"There is pleasure to be found in them without doubt. I would that the wind had veered a point or two. I do not like the sky, nor yonder misty horizon, nor this breeze hanging so dead at east!"

"The vessel makes great progress," calmly returned Mrs. Wyllys, observing that the young man spoke without consciousness, and fearing the effect of his words upon the mind of her pupil. "If we are going on our course, there is the appearance of a quick and prosperous passage."

"True!" exclaimed Wilder, who had become conscious of his indiscretion. "Quite probable, and very true. Mr. Earing, the air is getting too heavy for that duck. Hand all your top-gallant sails, and haul the ship up closer. Should the wind hang here at east-with-southing, we may want all the offing we can get."

The mate replied in the obedient manner which seamen use to their superiors; and, after scanning the signs of the weather for a moment himself, he proceeded to see the order executed. While the men were on the yards furling the light canvas, the females walked apart, leaving the young commander to the uninterrupted discharge of his duty. But Wilder, so far from deeming it necessary to lend his attention to so ordinary a service, the moment after he had spoken seemed perfectly unconscious that the mandate had issued from his mouth. He stood on the precise spot where the view of the ocean and the heavens first caught his eye, and his gaze still continued fastened on the aspect of the two elements. His look was always in the direction of the wind, which, though far from a gale, frequently fell upon the sails in heavy and silent puffs. After a long examination, the young mariner muttered his thoughts to himself, and commenced pacing the deck rapidly.

Still he would make sudden and short pauses, riveting his gaze on the point of the compass whence the blasts came, as if he distrusted the weather, and would fain penetrate the gloom of night, in order to relieve some painful doubt. At length his step became arrested, in one of those quick turns that he made at each end of his narrow walk. Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude stood near at hand, and were enabled to read with distinctness the anxious character of his countenance, as his eye became suddenly fastened on a distant point in the ocean, though in a quarter exactly opposite to that in which his former looks had been directed.

"Do you see reason to distrust the weather?" asked the governess, when she thought his examination had endured long enough to become ominous of evil.

"One does not look to leeward for the signs of the weather in a breeze like this."

"What is there, that you fasten your eye on so intently?"

Wilder raised his arm, and was about to speak, when the limb suddenly fell.

"It was a delusion!" he muttered, turning and pacing the deck more rapidly than ever.

His companions watched the extraordinary, and apparently unconscious movements of the young commander with amazement, and not without a little secret dismay. Their own looks wandered over the expanse of troubled water to leeward, but nowhere could they see more than the tossing element, capped with those ridges of garish foam which served only to make the chilly waste more dreary and imposing.

"We see nothing," said Gertrude, when Wilder again stopped to gaze, as before, on the seeming void.

"Look!" he answered, directing their eyes with his finger; "is there nothing there?"

"Nothing."

"You look into the sea. Here, just where the heavens and waters meet; along that streak of misty light, into which the waves are tossing themselves like little hillocks. There; now 'tis smooth again, and my eyes did not deceive me. By heavens, it is a ship!"

"Sail, ho!" shouted a voice from a-top. The cry sounded, in the ears of our adventurer, like the croaking of a sinister spirit.

"Where away?" he sternly demanded.

"Here on our lee-quarter, sir," returned the seaman, at the top of his voice. "I make her out a ship close-hauled; but, for an hour past, she has looked more like a mist than a vessel."

"He is right," muttered Wilder; "and yet 'tis a strange thing that a ship should be just there."

"And why stranger than that we are here?"

"Why!" said the young man, regarding Mrs. Wyllys, who had put this question, with a perfectly unconscious eye. "I say 'tis strange she should be there. I would she were anywhere else, or steering northward."

"You give no reason. Are we always to have warnings from you," she continued, "without reasons? Do you deem us so utterly unworthy of a reason? or do you think us altogether incapable of reflection on a subject connected with the sea? You have failed to make the essay, and are too quick to decide without it. Try us once again. We may possibly deceive your expectations."

Wilder laughed faintly, and bowed, as if he recollected himself. Still he entered into no explanation; but he turned his gaze on the quarter of the ocean where the strange sail was said to be. The females followed his example, and always with the same want of success. Gertrude expressed her disappointment aloud, and her complaints found their way to the ears of the young man.

"You see the streak of dim light,' he said, again pointing across the waste "The clouds have lifted a little there, but the spray of the sea is floating betweer us and the opening. Her spars look like the delicate work of a spider, against the sky; and yet you see there all the proportions, with the three masts, of a noble ship."

Aided by these minute directions, Ger-

trude at length caught a glimpse of the faint object, and soon succeeded in giving the true direction to the look of her governess also. Nothing was visible but the dim outline, not unaptly described by Wilder as resembling a spider's web.

"It must be a ship!" said Mrs. Wyllys; "but at a vast distance."

"Hum! Would it were further! I could wish that vessel anywhere but there."

"And why not there? Have you reason to dread an enemy has been waiting for us in this particular spot?"

"No; still I like not her position. Would to God she was going north!"

"It is some vessel from the port of New York, steering to his Majesty's islands in the Caribbean seas?"

"Not so," said Wilder, shaking his head; "no vessel from under the heights of Navesink could gain that offing with a wind like this."

"It is then some ship going into the same place, or perhaps a vessel bound for one of the bays of the middle colonies."

"Her road would be too plain to be mistaken. See; the stranger is close upon a wind."

"It may be a trader, or a cruiser coming *from* one of the places I have named."

"Neither. The wind has had too much northing the last two days for that."

"It is a vessel that we have overtaken, and which, like ourselves, has come out of the waters of Long Island Sound."

"That, indeed, is our last hope," muttered Wilder.

The governess who had put the foregoing questions in order to extract from the commander of the *Caroline* the information he so pertinaciously withheld, had now exhausted all her own knowledge on the subject, and was compelled to await his farther pleasure in the matter, or resort to the equivocal means of direct interrogation. But the busy state of Wilder's thoughts left her no immediate opportunity to pursue the subject. He soon summoned the officer of the watch to his councils, and consulted together apart for many minutes. The hardy, but far from quick-witted seaman who filled the second station in the ship, saw nothing so remarkable in the appearance of a strange sail in the precise spot where the dim and nearly aerial image of the unknown vessel was still visible; nor did he hesitate to pronounce her some honest trader, bent, like themselves, on her purpose of lawful commerce. His commander thought otherwise, as will appear by the short dialogue that passed between them.

"Is it not extraordinary that she should be just there?" demanded Wilder, after each in turn had made a closer examination of the faint object, by the aid of an excellent night-glass.

"She would certainly be better off here," returned the literal seaman, who had an eye only for the nautical situation of the stranger; "we should be none the worse for being a dozen leagues more to the eastward, ourselves. If the wind holds here at east-by-south-half-south, we shall have need of all that offing. I got jammed once between Hatteras and the Gulf——"

"Do you not perceive that she is where no vessel could or ought to be, unless she has run exactly the same course with ourselves?" interrupted Wilder. "Nothing, from any harbor south of New York, could have such northing, as the wind has held; while nothing from the colony of York would stand on this tack, if bound east; or would be there, if going southward."

The plain-going ideas of the honest mate were open to a reasoning which the reader may find a little obscure; for his mind contained a sort of chart of the ocean, to which he could at any time refer, with a proper discrimination between the various winds and all the different points of the compass. When properly directed he was not slow to see the probable justice of his young commander's inferences; and then wonder, in its turn, began to take possession of his more obtuse faculties.

"It is downright unnatural, truly, that the fellow should be just there!" he replied, shaking his head, but meaning no more than that it was entirely out of the order of nautical propriety; "I see the reason of what you say, Captain Wilder; and I don't know how to explain it. It is a ship, to a moral certainty!"

"Of that there is no doubt. But a ship most strangely placed!"

"I doubled the Good Hope in the year '46," continued the other, "and we saw a vessel lying, as it might be, here on our weather-bow—which is just opposite to this fellow, since he is on our lee-quarter—but there I saw a ship standing for an hour across our fore-foot, and yet, though we set the azimuth, not a degree did he budge, starboard or larboard, during all that time, which, as it was heavy weather, was, to say the least, something out of the common order."

"It was remarkable!" returned Wilder, with an air so vacant as to prove that he rather communed with himself than attended to his companion.

"There are mariners who say that the *Flying Dutchman* cruises off that cape, and that he often gets on the weather side of a stranger, and bears down upon him like a ship about to lay him aboard. Many is the king's cruiser, as they say, that has turned her hands up from a sweet sleep, when the lookouts have seen a double-decker come down in the night, with ports up, and batteries lighted; but then this can't be any such craft as the *Dutchman*, since she is, at the most, no more than a large sloop of war, if a cruiser at all."

"No," said Wilder, "this can never be the *Dutchman*."

"Yon vessel shows no lights; and, for that matter, she has such a misty look, that one might well question its being a ship at all. Then, again, the *Dutchman* is always seen to windward, and the strange sail we have here lies broad upon our lee-quarter!"

"It is no *Dutchman*," said Wilder, drawing a long breath, like a man awaking from a trance. "Main-topmast cross-trees, there!"

The man stationed aloft answered the hail in the customary manner, the short conversation that succeeded being necessarily maintained in shouts rather than in speeches.

"How long have you seen the stranger?" was the first demand of Wilder.

"I have just come aloft, sir; but the man I relieved tells me more than an hour."

"And has the man you relieved come down? or who is that I see sitting on the lee-side of the mast-head?"

"'Tis Bob Brace, sir; who says he cannot sleep, and so he stays upon the yard to keep me company."

"Send the man down. I would speak to him."

While the wakeful seaman was descending the rigging, the two officers continued silent, finding sufficient occupation in musing on what had already passed.

"Why are you not in your hammock?" said Wilder, a little sternly, to the man who, in obedience to his order, had descended to the quarter-deck.

"I am not sleep-bound, your honor, and I had a mind to pass another hour aloft."

"And why are you, who have two night-watches to keep already, so willing to enlist in a third?"

"To own the truth, sir, my mind has been a little misgiving about this passage since the moment we lifted our anchor."

Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude, who were auditors, insensibly drew nigher to listen, with a species of interest which betrayed itself by the thrilling of nerves, and an accelerated movement of the pulse.

"And you have your doubts, sir!" exclaimed the captain, in a tone of slight contempt. "Pray, may I ask what have you seen on board here to make you distrust the ship?"

"No harm in asking, your honor," returned the seaman, crushing the hat he held between two hands that had a grip like a couple of vises, "and so I hope there is none in answering. I pulled an oar in the boat after the old man this morning, and I cannot say I liked the manner in which he got from the chase. Then, there is something in the ship to leeward that comes athwart my fancy like a drag, and I confess, your honor, that I should make but little headway in a nap, though I should try the swing of a hammock."

"How long is it since you made out the ship to leeward?"

"I will not swear that a real living ship has been made out at all, sir. Something

I did see just before the bell struck seven, and there it is just as clear and just as dim, to be seen now, by them that have good eyes."

"And how did she bear when you first saw her?"

"Two or three points more upon the beam than now."

"Then we are passing her!" exclaimed Wilder, with a pleasure too evident to be concealed.

"No, your honor, no. You forget, sir, the ship has come closer to the wind since the middle watch was set."

"True," returned his young commander in disappointment; "true, very true; too true. And her bearing has not changed since you first made her out?"

"Not by compass, sir. It is a quick boat, that, or it would never hold such way with the *Royal Caroline*, and that, too, upon a stiffened bowline, which everybody knows is the real play of this ship."

"Go, get you to your hammock. In the morning we may have a better look at the fellow."

"And—you hear me, sir?" added the attentive mate, "do not keep the men's eyes open below, with a tale as long as the short cable, but take your own natural rest, and leave all others, that have clear consciences, to do the same."

"Mr. Earing," said Wilder, as the seaman reluctantly proceeded to his place of rest, "we will bring the ship upon the other tack, and get more easting while the land is so far from us. This course will be setting us upon Hatteras. Besides—"

"Yes, sir," the mate replied, observing his superior to hesitate, "as you were saying—besides, no one can foretell the length of a gale, nor the real quarter from which it may come."

"Precisely. No one can answer for the weather. The men are scarcely in their hammocks; turn them up at once, sir, before their eyes are heavy, and we will get the ship's head the other way."

The mate instantly sounded the well-known cry which summoned the watch below to the assistance of their shipmates on deck. Little delay occurred, and not a word was uttered, but the short, authoritative mandates which Wilder saw fit to deliver from his own lips. No longer pressed up against the wind, the ship, obedient to her helm, gracefully began to incline her head from the waves, and to bring the wind abeam. Then instead of breasting and mounting the endless hillocks, like a being that toiled heavily along its path, she fell into the trough of the sea, from which she issued like a courser, who having conquered an ascent, shoots along the track with redoubled velocity. For an instant the wind appeared to lull, though the wide ridge of foam which rolled along on each side of the vessel's bows sufficiently proclaimed that she was skimming before it. In another moment, the tall spars began to incline again to the west, and the vessel came swooping up to the wind, until her plunges and shocks against the seas were renewed as violently as before. When every yard and sheet were properly trimmed to meet the new position of the vessel, Wilder turned to get a glimpse of the stranger. A minute was lost in ascertaining the precise spot where he ought to appear; for, in such a chaos of water, and with no guide but the judgment, the eye was apt to deceive itself, by referring to the nearer and more familiar objects by which the spectator was surrounded.

"The stranger has vanished!" said Earing, with a voice in which mental relief and distrust were oddly manifesting themselves.

"He should indeed be on this quarter; but I see him not!"

"Aye, aye, sir; this is the way that the midnight cruiser off the Hope is said to come and go. There are men who have seen that vessel shut in by a fog, in as fine a starlight night as was ever met in a southern latitude. But then this cannot be the *Dutchman*, since it is so many long leagues from the pitch of the Cape to the coast of North America."

"Here he lies; and, by heaven, he has already gone about!"

The truth of what Wilder affirmed was sufficiently evident to the eye of a seaman. The same diminutive and misty tracery.

as before, was to be seen on the light background of the horizon, looking not unlike the faintest shadows cast upon some brighter surface by the deception of the phantasmagoria. But to the mariners, who so well knew how to distinguish between the different lines of her masts, it was very evident that her course had been suddenly and dexterously changed, and that she was now steering no longer to the south and west, but, like themselves, holding her way toward the north-east, or broadly off toward the middle of the Atlantic. The fact appeared to make a sensible impression on them all; though probably, had their reasons been sifted, they would have been found to be entirely different.

"That fellow has truly tacked!" said Earing, after a long meditative pause, and with a voice in which awe was beginning to get the ascendency of doubt. "Long as I have followed the sea, have I never before seen a vessel tack against such a head-beating sea. He must have been all shaking in the wind, when we gave him the last look, or we should have lost sight of him."

"A lively and quick working vessel might do it," said Wilder; "especially if strong-handed."

"Aye, the hand of Beelzebub is always strong; and a light job would he make of even a more difficult maneuver!"

"Mr. Earing," interrupted Wilder, "we will pack upon the *Caroline*, and try our sailing with this stranger. Get the main tack aboard, and set the top-gallant sail."

The slow-minded mate would have remonstrated against the order, had he dared; but there was that in the calm manner of his young commander, which admonished him of the hazard. He was not wrong, however, in considering the duty he was now to perform as one that was not entirely free from risk. The ship was already moving under quite as much canvas as he deemed it prudent to show at such an hour, and with so many threatening symptoms of heavier weather hanging about the horizon. The necessary orders were, however, repeated as promptly as they had been given. The seamen had already begun to consider the stranger, and to converse among themselves concerning his appearance and situation; and they obeyed with an alacrity that might perhaps have been traced to a secret but common wish to escape from his vicinity. The sails were successively and speedily set; and then each man folded his arms, and stood gazing steadily and intently at the shadowy object to leeward, in order to witness the effect of the change.

The *Royal Caroline* seemed, like her crew, sensible of the necessity of increasing her speed. As she felt the pressure of the broad sheets of canvas that had just been distended, the ship bowed lower, appearing to recline on the bed of water which rose under her lee nearly to the scuppers. On the other side the dark planks and polished copper lay bare for many feet, though often washed by the waves that came sweeping along her length, green and angrily, still capped, as usual, with crests of lucid foam. The shocks, as the vessel tilted against the billows, were becoming every moment more severe; and, from each encounter, a bright cloud of spray arose, which either fell glittering on the deck, or drove, in brilliant mist across the rolling water, far to leeward.

Wilder long watched the ship with a clouded brow, but with the steady intelligence of a seaman. Once or twice, when she trembled, and appeared to stop in her violent encounter with a wave as suddenly as if she had struck a rock, his lips severed, and he was about to give the order to reduce the sail; but a glance at the misty-looking image in the western horizon caused him to change his purpose. Like a desperate adventurer, who had cast his fortunes on some hazardous experiment, he appeared to await the issue with a resolution as haughty as it was unconquerable.

"The top-gallant is bending like a whip," muttered the careful Earing, at his elbow.

"Let it go; we have spare spars enough to put in its place."

"I have always found the *Caroline*

leaky, after she has been strained by driving her against the sea."

"We have our pumps."

"True, sir; but in my poor judgment, it is idle to think of outsailing a craft that the devil commands, if he does not altogether handle."

"One will never know that, Mr. Earing, till he tries."

"We gave the *Dutchman* a chance of that sort; and, I must say, we not only had the most canvas spread, but much the best of the wind; and what good did it do? there he lay, under his three topsails, driver and jib; and we, with studding-sails alow and aloft, couldn't alter his bearing a foot."

"The *Dutchman* is never seen in a northern latitude."

"Well, I cannot say he is," returned Earing, in a sort of compelled resignation; "but he who has put that flyer off the Cape may have found the cruise so profitable, as to wish to send another ship into these seas."

Wilder made no reply. He had either humored the superstitious apprehension of his mate enough, or his mind was too intent on its principal object to dwell longer on a foreign subject.

Notwithstanding the seas that met her advance, in such quick succession as greatly to retard her progress, the Bristol trader had soon toiled her way through a league of the troubled element. At every plunge she took, the bows divided a mass of water that appeared to be fast getting more vast and violent, and more than once the struggling hull was nearly buried forward, in some wave which it had equal difficulty in mounting or penetrating.

The mariners narrowly watched the smallest movements of their vessel. Not a man left her deck for hours. The superstitious awe, which had taken such deep hold of the untutored faculties of the chief mate, had not been slow in extending its influence to the meanest of her crew. Even the accident which had befallen her former commander, and the sudden and mysterious manner in which the young officer who now trod the quarter-deck, so singularly firm and calm under circumstances deemed so imposing, had their influence in heightening the wild impression. The impunity with which the *Caroline* bore such a press of canvas, under the circumstances in which she was placed, added to their kindling admiration; and, ere Wilder had determined in his own mind on the powers of his ship, in comparison with those of the vessel that so strangely hung in the horizon, he was himself becoming the subject of unnatural and revolting suspicions to his own crew.

CHAPTER XV.

"I' the name of truth
Are ye fantastical, or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show?"—MACBETH.

SUPERSTITION is a quality that seems indigenous to the ocean. Few common mariners are exempt from its influence in a greater or lesser degree; though it is found to exist, among the seamen of different people, in forms that are tempered by their respective national habits and peculiar opinions. The sailor of the Baltic has his secret rites, and his manner of propitiating the gods of the wind; the Mediterranean mariner tears his hair and kneels before the shrine of some impotent saint, when his own hand might better do the service he implores; while the more skillful Englishman sees the spirits of the dead in the storm, and hears the cries of a lost messmate in the gusts that sweep the waste he navigates. Even the better instructed and still more reasoning American has not been able to shake off entirely the secret influence of a sentiment that seems to be the concomitant of his condition.

There is a majesty in the might of the great deep, that has a tendency to keep open the avenues of that dependent credulity which more or less besets the mind of every man, however he may have fortified his intellect by thought. With the firmament above him, and wandering on an interminable waste of water, the less gifted seaman is tempted, at every step of his pilgrimage, to seek the relief of some propitious omen. The few which are sup-

ported by scientific causes give support to the many that have their origin only in his own excited and doubting fancy. The gambols of the dolphin, the earnest and busy passage of the porpoise, the ponderous sporting of the unwieldy whale, and the screams of the marine birds, have all, like the signs of the ancient soothsayers, their attendant consequences of good or evil. The confusion between things which are explicable, and things which are not, gradually brings the mind of the mariner to a state in which any exciting and unnatural sentiment is welcome, if it be for no other reason than that, like the vast element on which he passes his life, it bears the impression of what is thought a supernatural, because it is an incomprehensible cause.

The crew of the *Royal Caroline* were all from that distant island that has been, and still continues to be, the hive of nations, which are probably fated to carry her name to a time when the site of her own fallen power shall be sought as a curiosity, like the remains of a city in a desert. The whole events of the day had a tendency to arouse the latent superstition of these men. It has already been said, that the calamity which had befallen their former commander, and the manner in which a stranger had succeeded to his authority, had their influence in increasing their disposition to doubt. The sail to leeward appeared most inopportunely for the character of our adventurer, who had not yet enjoyed a fitting opportunity to secure the confidence of his inferiors, before such untoward circumstances occurred as threatened to deprive him of it forever.

There has existed but one occasion for introducing to the reader the mate who filled the station in the ship next to that of Earing. He was called Knighthead; a name that was, in sound at least, indicative of a certain misty obscurity that beset his superior member. The qualities of his mind may be appreciated by the few reflections he saw fit to make on the escape of the old mariner whom Wilder had intended to punish. As this individual was but one degree removed from the common men in situation, he was much more nearly associated with them in habits and opinions than Earing. His influence among them was accordingly much greater than that of his brother mate, while his authority was less, and his sentiments were very generally received as the rule by which all things, that did not actually depend on the mere right to command, were to be judged.

After the ship had been wore, and during the time that Wilder, with a view to lose sight of his unwelcome neighbor, was endeavoring to urge her through the seas in the manner already described, the stubborn and mystified tar remained in the waist of the vessel, surrounded by a few of the older and more experienced seamen, holding converse on the remarkable appearance of the phantom to leeward, and of the extraordinary manner in which their unknown officer saw fit to attest the enduring qualities of their own vessel. We shall commence our relation of the dialogue at a point where Knighthead saw fit to discontinue his distant innuendoes, in order to deal more directly with the subject he had under discussion.

"I've heard it said, by older seafaring men than any in this ship," he continued, "that the devil has been known to send one of his mates aboard a lawful trader, to lead her astray among shoals and quicksands, in order that he might make a wreck, and get his share of the salvage among the souls of the people. What man can say who gets into the cabin, when an unknown name stands first in the shipping-list of the vessel?"

"The stranger is shut in by a cloud!" exclaimed one of the mariners, who, while he listened to the philosophy of his officer, still kept an eye riveted on the mysterious object to leeward.

"Aye, aye; it would occasion no surprise to me to see that craft steering into the moon! Luck is like a fly-block and its yard: when one goes up, the other comes down. They say the red-coats ashore have had their turn of fortune, and it is time we honest seamen look out for our squalls. I have doubled the Horn, brothers, in a king's ship, and I have seen

the bright cloud that never sets, and I have held a living corposant in my own hand. But these are things which any man may look on, who will go upon a yard in a gale, or ship aboard a South-seaman; still, I pronounce it uncommon for a vessel to see her shadow in the haze, as we have ours this moment; there it comes again!—here-away, between the after-shroud and the backstay—or for a trader to carry sail in a fashion that would make every knee in a bomb-ketch work like a tooth-brush fiddling across a passenger's mouth after he has had a smart bout with the sea-sickness."

"And yet the lad holds the ship in hand," said the oldest of all the seamen, who kept his gaze fastened on the proceedings of Wilder; "he is driving her through it in a mad manner, I will allow; but yet, so far, he has not parted a yarn."

"Yarn!" repeated the mate, in a tone of contempt; "what signify yarns, when the whole cable is to snap, and in such a fashion as to leave no hope for the anchor, except in a buoy rope? Hark ye, old Bill, the devil never finishes his jobs by halves. What is to happen will happen bodily; and no easing-off, as if you were lowering the captain's lady into a boat, and he on deck to see fair play."

"Mr. Knighthead knows how to keep a ship's reckoning in all weathers!" said another, whose manner sufficiently announced the dependence he himself placed on the capacity of the second mate.

"And no credit to me for the same. I have seen all services, and handled every rig, from a lugger to a double-decker! Few men can say more in their own favor than myself; for the little I know has been got by much hardship, and small schooling. But what matters information, or even seamanship, against witchcraft, or the workings of one whom I don't choose to name, seeing there is no use in offending any gentleman unnecessarily? I say, brothers, that this ship is packed upon in a fashion that no prudent sailor ought to, or would, allow."

A common murmur announced that most, if not all, of his hearers were of the same mind.

"Let us examine calmly and reasonably, and in a manner becoming enlightened Englishmen, into the whole state of the case," the mate continued, casting an eye obliquely over his shoulder, to make sure that the individual of whose displeasure he stood in so salutary awe was not actually at his elbow. "We are all of us, to a man, native-born islanders, without a drop of foreign blood among us; not so much as a Scotchman or an Irishman in the ship. Let us therefore look into the philosophy of this affair, with the judgment which becomes our breeding. In the first place, here is honest Nicholas Nichols slips from this here water-cask, and breaks me a leg! Now, brothers, I've known men to fall from tops and yards, and lighter damage done. But what matters it to a certain person, how far he throws his man, since he has only to lift a finger to get us all hanged? Then comes me aboard here a stranger, with a look of the colonies about him, and none of your plain-dealing, out-and-out, smooth English faces, such as a man can cover with the flat of his hand——"

"The lad is well enough to the eye," interrupted the old mariner.

"Ape, therein lies the whole deviltry of this matter! He is good-looking, I grant ye; but it is no such good-looking as an Englishman loves. There is a meaning about him that I don't like; I never likes too much meaning in a man's countenance, seeing that it is not always easy to understand what he would be doing. Then, this stranger gets to be master of the ship, or, what is the same thing, next to master; while he who should be on deck giving his orders in a time like this is lying in his berth unable to tack himself, much less to put the vessel about; and yet no man can say how the thing came to pass."

"He drove a bargain with the consignee for the station, and right glad did the cunning merchant seem to get so tight a youth to take charge of the *Caroline*."

"A merchant, after all, like the rest of us, is made of nothing better than clay; and, what is worse, it is seldom that, in putting him together, he is dampened with salt water. Many is the trader that has

doused his spectacles, and shut his account-books, to step aside to overreach his neighbor, and then come back to find he has overreached himself. Mr. Bale no doubt thought he was doing the clever thing for the owners, when he shipped this Mr. Wilder; but then, perhaps, he did not know that the vessel was sold to ——. It becomes a plain-going seaman to have a respect for all he sails under; so I will not, unnecessarily, name the person who, I believe, has got, whether he came by it in a fair purchase or not, no small right in this vessel."

"I have never seen a ship got out of irons more handsomely than he handled the *Caroline* this very morning."

Knighthead indulged in a low, but what to his listeners appeared to be an exceedingly meaning laugh.

"When a ship has a certain sort of captain, one is not to be surprised at anything," he answered, the instant his merriment ceased. "For my own part, I shipped to go from Bristol to the Carolinas and Jamaica, touching at Newport out and home; and I will say, boldly, I have no wish to go anywhere else. As to backing the *Caroline* from her awkward berth alongside the slaver, why, it was well done; too well for so young a mariner. Had I done the thing myself, it could not have been done better. But what think you, brothers, of the old man in the skiff? There was a chase, and an escape, such as few old sea-dogs have the fortune to behold! I have heard of a smuggler that was chased a hundred times by his Majesty's cutters, in the chops of the Channel, and which always had a fog handy to run into, but from which no man could truly say he ever saw her come out again! This skiff may have plied between the land and that Guernseyman, for anything I know to the contrary; but it is not a boat I wish to pull a scull in."

"That *was* a remarkable flight!" exclaimed the elder seaman, whose faith in the character of our adventurer began to give way gradually, before such an accumulation of testimony.

"I call it so; though other men may possibly know better than I, who have only followed the water five-and-thirty years. Then, here is the sea getting up in an unaccountable manner! and look at these rags of clouds which darken the heavens; and yet there is light enough, coming from the ocean, for a good scholar to read by!"

"I've often seen the weather as it is now."

"Aye, who has not? It is seldom that any man, let him come from what part he will, makes his first voyage as captain. Let who will be out to-night upon the water, I'll engage he has been there before. I have seen worse-looking skies, and even worse-looking water than this; but I never knew any good come from either. The night I was wrecked in the bay of——"

"In the waste there!" cried Wilder.

Had a warning voice arisen from the turbulent and rushing ocean itself, it would not have sounded more alarming in the startled ears of the conscious seamen than this sudden hail. Their young commander found it necessary to repeat it, before even Knighthead, the proper and official spokesman, could muster resolution to answer.

"Get the fore-top-gallant-sail on the ship, sir," continued Wilder, when the customary reply let him know that he had been heard.

The mate and his companions regarded each other for a moment, in dull admiration; and many a melancholy shake of the head was exchanged, before one of the party threw himself into the weather-rigging, proceeding aloft with a doubting mind in order to loosen the sail in question.

There was certainly enough, in the desperate manner with which Wilder pressed the canvas on the vessel, to excite distrust, either of his intentions or judgment, in the opinions of men less influenced by superstition than those it was now his lot to command. It had long been apparent to Earing, and his more ignorant, and consequently more obstinate brother-officer, that their young superior had the same desire to escape from the spectral-looking ship, which so strangely followed

their movements, as they had themselves. They only differed in the mode; but this difference was so very material that the two mates consulted together apart, and then Earing, something stimulated by the hardy opinion of his coadjutor, approached his commander with the determination of delivering the results of their united judgments, with the directness which he thought the occasion now demanded. But there was that in the steady eye and calm mien of Wilder, that caused him to touch on the dangerous subject with a discretion and circumlocution that were a little remarkable for the individual. He stood watching the effect of the sail recently spread, for several minutes, before he even presumed to open his mouth. But a terrible encounter between the vessel and a wave that lifted its angry crest apparently some dozen feet above the approaching bows, gave him courage to proceed, by admonishing him afresh of the danger of continuing silent.

"I do not see that we drop the stranger, though the ship is wallowing through the water so heavily," he commenced, determined to be as circumspect as possible in his advances.

Wilder bent another of his frequent glances on the misty object in the horizon, and then turned his frowning eye toward the point whence the wind proceeded, as if he would invite its heaviest blasts; he, however, made no answer.

"We have ever found the crew discontented at the pumps, sir," resumed the other, after a sufficient pause for the reply he in vain expected: "I need not tell an officer, who knows his duty so well, that seamen rarely love their pumps."

"Whatever I may find necessary to order, Mr. Earing, this ship's company will find it necessary to execute."

There was a settled air of command in the manner with which this tardy answer was given, that did not fail of its effect. Earing recoiled a step submissively, affecting to be lost in consulting the driving masses of clouds; then summoning his resolution, he attempted to renew the attack in a different quarter.

"Is it your deliberate opinion, Captain Wilder," he said, using the title to which the claim of our adventurer might well be questioned, with a view to propitiate him, "is it, then, your deliberate opinion that the *Royal Caroline* can, by any human means, be made to drop yonder vessel?"

"I fear not," returned the young man, drawing a breath so long, that all his secret concern seemed struggling in his breast for utterance.

"And, sir, with proper submission to your better education and authority in this ship, I *know* not. I have often seen these matches tried in my time; and well do I know that nothing is gained by straining a vessel with the hope of getting to windward of one of these flyers!"

"Take the glass, Earing, and tell me under what canvas the stranger is going, and what you think his distance may be," said Wilder, without appearing to advert at all to what the other had just observed.

The honest and really well-meaning mate deposited his hat on the quarter-deck, and did as desired. When his look had been long, grave, and deeply absorbed, he closed the glass with the palm of his broad hand, and replied in the manner of one whose opinion was sufficiently matured:

"If yonder sail had been built and fitted like other craft," he said, "I should not be backward in pronouncing her a full-rigged ship, under the three single-reefed topsails, courses, spanker and jib."

"Has she no more?"

"To that I would qualify, provided an opportunity were given me to make sure that she is, in all respects, like other vessels."

"And yet, Earing, with all this press of canvas, by the compass, we have not left her a foot."

"Lord, sir," returned the mate, shaking his head like one who was well convinced of the folly of such efforts, "if you were to split every cloth in the main-course, you will never alter the bearings of that craft an inch, till the sun shall rise! Then, indeed, such as have eyes that are good enough, might perhaps see her sailing about among the clouds; though it has never been my fortune, be it bad or be it

good, to fall in with one of these cruisers after the day has fairly dawned."

"And the distance?" said Wilder; "you have not yet spoken of her distance."

"That is much as people choose to measure. She may be here, nigh enough to toss a biscuit into our tops; or she may be there, where she seems to be, hull down in the horizon."

"But, if where she seems to be?"

"Why, she *seems* to be a vessel of about six hundred tons, and, judging from appearances only, a man might be tempted to say she was a couple of leagues, more or less, under our lee."

"I put her at the same! Six miles to windward is not a little advantage in a hard chase. By heavens, Earing, I'll drive the *Caroline* out of water, but I'll leave him!"

"That might be done, if the ship had wings like a curlew, or a seagull; but, as it is, I think we are more likely to drive her under."

"She bears her canvas well, so far. You know not what the boat can do when urged."

"I have seen her sailed in all weathers, Captain Wilder, but——"

His mouth was suddenly closed. A vast black wave reared itself between the ship and the eastern horizon, and came rolling onward, seeming to threaten to engulf all before it. Even Wilder watched the shock with breathless anxiety, conscious, for the moment, that he had exceeded the bounds of sound discretion in urging his ship so powerfully against such a mass of water. Luckily the sea broke a few fathoms from the bows of the *Caroline*, sending its surge in a flood of foam upon her decks. For half a minute the forward part of the vessel disappeared, as if, unable to mount the swell, it were striving to go through it, and then she heavily emerged, gemmed with a million of the scintillating insects of the ocean. The ship stopped, trembling in every joint of her massive and powerful frame, like some affrighted courser; and, when she resumed her course, it was with a moderation that appeared to warn those who governed her movements of their indiscretion.

Earing faced his commander in silence, perfectly conscious that nothing he could utter contained an argument like this. The seamen no longer hesitated to mutter their disapprobation aloud, and many a prophetic opinion was ventured concerning the consequences of such reckless risks. To all this Wilder turned an insensible ear. Firm in his secret purpose, he would have braved a greater hazard to accomplish his object. But a distinct though smothered shriek, from the stern of the vessel, reminded him of the fears of others. Turning quickly on his heel, he approached the still trembling Gertrude and her governess, who had both been, throughout the whole of these long and tedious hours, unobtrusive, but deeply interested, observers of all his movements.

"The vessel bore that shock so well, I have great reliance on her powers," he said in a soothing voice, but with words that were intended to lull her into a blind security. "With a firm ship, a thorough seaman is never at a loss."

"Mr. Wilder," returned the governess, "I have seen much of this terrible element on which you live. It is vain to think of deceiving me. I know that you are urging the vessel beyond what is usual. Have you sufficient motive for this hardihood?"

"Madam—I have!"

"And is it, like so many of your motives, to continue locked forever in your own breast? or may we, who are equal participators in its consequences, claim to share equally in the reason?"

"Since you know so much of the profession," returned the young man, slightly laughing, but in a way that rendered what he had said more alarming by the sounds produced in the unnatural effort, "you need not be told that, in order to get a ship to windward, it is necessary to show her canvas."

"You can, at least, answer one of my questions more directly. Is this wind sufficiently favorable to pass the dangerous shoals of the Hatteras?"

"I doubt it."

"Then why not return to the place whence we came?"

"Will you consent to that?" demanded the youth, with the swiftness of thought.

"I would go to my father," said Gertrude, with a rapidity so nearly resembling his own that the ardent girl appeared to want breath to utter the little she said.

"And I am willing, Mr. Wilder, to abandon the ship entirely," calmly resumed the governess. "I require no explanation of all your mysterious warnings: restore us to our friends in Newport, and no farther questions shall ever be asked."

"It might be done!" muttered our adventurer; "it might be done! A few busy hours would do it, with this wind. Mr. Earing!"

The mate was instantly at his elbow. Wilder pointed to the dim object to leeward; and handing him the glass, desired that he would take another view. Each again looked, in turn, long and closely.

"He shows no more sail!" said the commander impatiently, when his own prolonged gaze was ended.

"Not a cloth, sir. But what matters it to such a craft, how much canvas is spread, or how the wind blows?"

"Earing, I think there is too much southing in this breeze; and there is more brewing in yonder streak of dusky clouds on our beam. Let the ship fall off a couple of points or more, and take the strain off the spars by a pull upon the weather braces."

The simple-minded mate heard the order with an astonishment he did not care to conceal. There needed no explanation to teach one of his experience that the effect would be to go over the same track they had just past; and that it was in substance abandoning the objects of the voyage. He presumed to defer his compliance in order to remonstrate.

"I hope there is no offense for an elderly seaman, like myself, Captain Wilder, in venturing an opinion on the weather," he said. "When the pocket of the owner is interested, my judgment approves of going about, for I have no taste for land that the wind blows on, instead of off. But by easing the ship with a reef or two, she would always be jogging seaward; and all we gain would be clear gain, because it is so much off the Hatteras. Besides, who can say that to-morrow, or the next day, we sha'n't have a puff out of America, here at northwest."

"A couple of points fall off, and a pull upon your weather braces!" said Wilder, in a way to show that he was in earnest.

It would have exceeded the peaceful and submissive disposition of the honest Earing to delay any longer. The orders were given to the inferiors; and, as a matter of course, they were obeyed—though ill-suppressed and portentous sounds of discontent, at the undetermined, and seemingly unreasonable, changes in their officer's mind, might have been heard issuing from the mouths of Knighthead and the other veterans of the crew.

To all these symptoms of disaffection Wilder remained utterly indifferent. If he heard them at all, he either disdained to yield them any notice, or, guided by a temporizing policy, he chose to appear unconscious of their import. In the meantime the vessel, like a bird whose wing had wearied with struggling against the tempest, and which inclines from the gale to choose an easier course, glided swiftly away, quartering the crests of the waves, or sinking gracefully in their troughs as she yielded to the force of a wind that was now made to be favorable. The sea rolled on, in a direction no longer adverse to her course; and by receding from the breeze, the quantity of sail spread was no longer trying to her powers of endurance. Still, in the opinion of all her crew, she had quite enough canvas exposed to a night of so portentous aspect. But not so in the judgment of the stranger who was charged with the guidance of her destinies. In a voice that still admonished his inferiors of the danger of disobedience, he commanded several broad sheets of studding sails to be set in quick succession. Urged by these new impulses, the ship went careering over the waves, leaving a train of foam in her track that rivaled in its volume and brightness the tumbling summit of the largest swell.

When sail after sail had been set, until even Wilder was obliged to confess to

himself that the *Royal Caroline*, staunch as she was, would bear no more, our adventurer began to pace the deck again, and to cast his eyes about him to watch the fruits of his new experiment. The change in the course of the Bristol trader had made a corresponding change in the apparent direction of the stranger, who yet floated in the horizon like a diminutive and misty shadow. Still the unerring compass told the watchful mariner that she continued to maintain the same relative position as when first seen.* No effort on the part of Wilder could alter her bearing an inch. Another hour soon passed away, during which, as the log told him, his own ship had rolled through three leagues of water, and still there lay the stranger in the west, as if he were merely a lessened shadow of herself, cast by the *Caroline* upon the distant and dusky clouds. An alteration in his course exposed a broader surface of his canvas to the eyes of those who watched him, but in nothing else was there a visible change. If his sail had been materially increased, the distance and obscurity prevented even the understanding Earing from detecting it. Perhaps the excited mind of the worthy mate was too much disposed to believe in the miraculous powers possessed by his unaccountable neighbor to admit of the full exercise of his experienced faculties on the occasion, but even Wilder, who vexed his sight in often-repeated examinations, was obliged to confess to himself that the stranger seemed to glide across the waste of waters more like a body floating in the air than a ship resorting to the known expedients of mariners.

Mrs. Wyllys and her charge by this time had retired to their cabin; the former secretly felicitating herself on the prospect of soon quitting a vessel that had commenced its voyage under such sinister circumstances as to have deranged the equilibrium of even her governed and well disciplined mind. Gertrude was left in ignorance of the change. To her uninstructed eye, all appeared the same on the wilderness of the ocean; Wilder having it in his power to alter the direction of his vessel as often as he pleased, without his fairer and more youthful passenger being any the wiser.

Not so with the intelligent commander of the *Caroline* himself. To him there was neither obscurity nor doubt in the midst of his midnight path. His eye had long been familiar with every star that rose from out the dark and ragged outline of the sea, nor was there a blast that swept across the ocean, that his burning cheek could not tell from what quarter of the heavens it poured out its power. He knew and understood each inclination made by the bows of his ship: his mind kept even pace with her windings and turnings in all her trackless wanderings; and he had little need to consult any of the accessories of his art, to tell him what course to steer or in what manner to guide the movements of the nice machine he governed.

Still he was unable to explain the extraordinary evolutions of the stranger. The smallest change he ordered seemed rather anticipated than followed; and his hopes of eluding a vigilance that proved so watchful, were baffled by a facility of maneuvering, and a superiority of sailing, that really began to assume, even to his intelligent eyes, the appearance of some unaccountable agency.

While our adventurer was engaged in the gloomy musings that such impressions were not ill adapted to excite, the heavens and the sea began to exhibit new aspects. The bright streak which had so long hung along the eastern horizon, as if the curtain of the firmament had been slightly open to admit a passage for the winds, was now suddenly closed; and heavy masses of black clouds began to gather in that quarter, until vast volumes of the vapor were piled upon the water, blending the two elements in one. On the other hand, the gloomy canopy lifted in the west, and a long belt of lurid light was shed athwart the view. In this flood of bright and portentous mist the stranger still floated, though there were moments

* The reader will understand that the *apparent* direction of a ship at sea, seen from the deck of another, changes with the change of course, but that the *true* direction can only be varied by a change of relative position.

when his faint and fanciful outlines seemed to be melting into air.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Yet again? What do you here? Shall we give o'er and drown? Have you a mind to think?"
—TEMPEST.

OUR watchful adventurer was not blind to these sinister omens No sooner did the peculiar atmosphere, by which the mysterious image that he so often examined was suddenly surrounded, catch his eye, than his voice was raised in the clear, powerful, and exciting notes of warning.

"Stand by," he called aloud, "to in all studding-sails! Down with them!" he cried, scarcely giving his former words time to reach the ears of his subordinates. "Down with every rag of them fore and aft the ship! Man the top-gallant clew-lines, Mr. Earing. Clew up, and clew down! In with everything, cheerily, men! In!"

This was a language to which the crew of the *Caroline* were no strangers, and it was doubly welcome, since the meanest seaman among them had long thought that his unknown commander had been heedlessly trifling with the safety of the vessel, by the hardy manner in which he disregarded the wild symptoms of the weather. But they undervalued the keen-eyed vigilance of Wilder. He had certainly driven the Bristol trader through the water at a rate she had never been known to go before, but, thus far, the facts themselves gave evidence in his favor, since no injury was the consequence of what they deemed temerity. At the quick, sudden order just given, however, the whole ship was in an uproar. A dozen seamen called to each other, from different parts of the vessel, each striving to lift his voice above the roaring ocean; and there was every appearance of a general and inextricable confusion: but the same authority which had so unexpectedly aroused them into activity, produced order from their ill-directed though vigorous efforts.

Wilder had spoken, to awaken the drowsy and to excite the torpid. The instant he found each man on the alert, he resumed his orders with a calmness that gave a direction to the powers of all, and yet with an energy that he well knew was called for by the occasion. The enormous sheets of duck, which had looked like so many light clouds in the murky and threatening heavens, were soon seen fluttering wildly, as they descended from their high places, and, in a few minutes, the ship was reduced to the action of her more secure and heavier canvas. To effect this object, every man in the ship exerted his powers to the utmost, under the guidance of the steady but rapid mandates of their commander. Then followed a short and apprehensive pause. All eyes were turned toward the quarter where the ominous signs had been discovered; and each individual endeavored to read their import with an intelligence correspondent to the degree of skill he might have acquired during his particular period of service on that treacherous element which was now his home.

The dim tracery of the stranger's form had been swallowed up by the flood of misty light, which, by this time, rolled along the sea like drifting vapor, semi-pellucid, preternatural, and seemingly tangible. The ocean itself appeared admonished that a quick and violent change was nigh. The waves ceased to break in their former foaming and brilliant crests, and black masses of water lifted their surly summits against the eastern horizon, no longer shedding their own peculiar and lucid atmosphere around them. The breeze, which had been so fresh, and which had even blown with a force that nearly amounted to a gale, was lulling and becoming uncertain, as it might be awed by the more violent power that was gathering along the borders of the sea, in the direction of the neighboring continent. Each moment the eastern puffs of air lost their strength, becoming more and more feeble, until, in an incredibly short period, the heavy sails were heard flapping against the masts. A frightful and ominous calm succeeded. At this instant, a gleam

flashed from the fearful obscurity of the ocean, and a roar, like that of a sudden burst of thunder, bellowed along the waters. The seamen turned their startled looks on each other, standing aghast, as if a warning of what was to follow had come out of the heavens themselves. But their calm and more sagacious commander put a different construction on the signal. His lips curled, in high professional pride, and he muttered with scorn—

"Does he imagine that we sleep? Aye, he has got it himself, and would open our eyes to what is coming! What does he conjecture we have been about since the middle watch was set?"

Wilder made a swift turn or two on the quarter-deck, turning his quick glances from one quarter of the heavens to another; from the black and lulling water on which his vessel was rolling, to the sails; and from his silent and profoundly expectant crew, to the dim line of his spars that were waving above his head, like so many pencils tracing their curvilinear and wanton images over the murky volumes of the superincumbent clouds.

"Lay the after-yards square!" he said, in a voice which was heard by every man on deck, though his words were apparently spoken but little above his breath. The creaking of the blocks, as the spars came slowly and heavily round to the indicated position, contributed to the imposing character of the moment, sounding like notes of fearful preparation.

"Haul up the courses!" resumed Wilder, with the same eloquent calmness of manner. Then, taking another glance at the threatening horizon, he added slowly, but with emphasis, "Furl them—furl them both. Away aloft, and hand your courses!" he continued in a shout; "roll them up, cheerily: in with them, boys, cheerily! in!"

The conscious seamen took their impulses from the tones of their commander. In a moment, twenty dark forms were leaping up the rigging, with the alacrity of so many quadrupeds. In another minute, the vast and powerful sheets of canvas were effectually rendered harmless, by securing them in tight rolls to their respective spars. The men descended as swiftly as they had mounted to the yards; and then succeeded another breathing pause.

At this appalling moment, a candle would have sent its flame perpendicularly toward the heavens. The ship, missing the steadying power of the wind, rolled heavily in the troughs of the seas, which began to lessen at each instant, as if the startled element was recalling into the security of its own vast bosom that portion of its particles which had so lately been permitted to gambol madly over its surface. The water washed sullenly along the side of the ship, or, as she laboring rose from one of her frequent falls into the hollow of the waves, it shot back into the ocean from her decks in glittering cascades. Every hue of the heavens, every sound of the element, and each dusky and anxious countenance, helped to proclaim the intense interest of the moment. In this brief interval of expectation and inactivity, the mates again approached their commander.

"It is an awful night, Captain Wilder!" said Earing, presuming on his rank to be the first to speak.

"I have known far less notice given of a shift of wind," was the answer.

"We have had time to gather in our kites, 'tis true, sir; but there are signs and warnings that come with this change which the oldest seaman must dread!"

"Yes," continued Knighthead, in a voice that sounded hoarse and powerful, even amid the fearful accessories of the scene; "yes, it is no trifling commission that can call people that I shall not name out upon the water in such a night as this. It was in just such weather as this that I saw the *Vesuvius* ketch go to a place so deep, that her own mortar would not have been able to have sent a bomb into the open air, had hands and fire been there fit to let it off!"

"Aye; and it was in such a time that the *Greenlandman* was cast upon the Orkneys, in as flat a calm as ever lay on the sea."

"Gentlemen," said Wilder, with a pecul-

iar and perhaps an ironical emphasis on the word, "what would ye have? There is not a breath of air stirring, and the ship is naked to her top-sails!"

It would have been difficult for either of the two malcontents to give a very satisfactory answer to this question. Both were secretly goaded by mysterious and superstitious apprehensions, that were powerfully aided by the more real and intelligible aspect of the night; but neither had so far forgotten his manhood and his professional pride, as to lay bare the full extent of his own weakness, at a moment when he was liable to be called upon for the exhibition of qualities of a more positive and determined character. The feeling that was uppermost betrayed itself in the reply of Earing, though in an indirect and covert manner.

"Yes, the vessel is snug enough now," he said, "though eyesight has shown us it is no easy matter to drive a freighted ship through the water as fast as one of those flying craft aboard which no man can say who stands at the helm, by what compass she steers, or what is her draught!"

"Aye," resumed Knighthead, "I call the *Caroline* fast for an honest trader. There are few square-rigged boats who do not wear the pennants of the King, that can eat her out of the wind on a bow-line, or bring her into their wake with studding-sails set. But this is a time and an hour to make a seaman think. Look at yon hazy light, here in with the land, that is coming so fast down upon us, and then tell me whether it comes from the coast of America, or whether it comes from out of the stranger who has been so long running under our lee, but who has got, or is fast getting, the wind of us at last, while none here can say how, or why. I have just this much, and no more, to say; give me for consort a craft whose captain I know, or give me none!"

"Such is your taste, Mr. Knighthead," said Wilder, coldly.

"Yes, yes," observed the more cautious and prudent Earing; "in time of war, and with letters-of-marque aboard, a man may honestly hope the sail he sees should have a stranger for her master; or otherwise he would never fall in with an enemy. But though an Englishman born myself, I should rather give the ship in that mist a clear sea, seeing that I neither know her nation nor her cruise. Ah, Captain Wilder, this is an awful sight for the morning-watch! Often and often have I seen the sun rise in the east, and no harm done; but little good can come of a day when the light first breaks in the west. Cheerfully would I give the owners the last month's pay, hard as it has been earned, did I but know under what flag the stranger sails."

"Frenchman, Don, or Devil, yonder he comes!" cried Wilder. Then, turning toward the attentive crew, he shouted, in a voice that was appalling by its vehemence and warning, "Let run the after-halyards! round with the fore-yard; round with it, men, with a will!"

These were cries that the startled crew but too well understood. Every nerve and muscle was exerted to execute the orders, to be in readiness for the tempest. No man spoke; but each expended the utmost of his power and skill in direct and manly efforts. Nor was there, in verity, a moment to lose, or a particle of human strength expended here, without a sufficient object.

The lurid and fearful-looking mist, which, for the last quarter of an hour, had been gathering in the northwest, was driving down upon them with the speed of a race-horse. The air had already lost the damp and peculiar feelings of an easterly breeze; and little eddies were beginning to flutter among the masts—precursors of the coming squall. Then, a rushing, roaring sound was heard moaning along the ocean, whose surface was first dimpled, next ruffled, and finally covered with a sheet of clear, white, and spotless foam. At the next moment, the power of the wind fell upon the inert and laboring Bristol trader.

While the gust was approaching, Wilder had seized the slight opportunity afforded by the changeful puffs of air to get the ship as much as possible before the wind; but the sluggish movement of the vessel

met neither the wishes of his own impatience nor the exigencies of the moment. Her bows slowly and heavily fell off from the north, leaving her precisely in a situation to receive the first shock on her broadside. Happy it was, for all who had life at risk in that defenseless vessel, that she was not fated to receive the whole weight of the tempest at a blow. The sails fluttered and trembled on their massive yards, bellying and collapsing alternately for a minute, and then the rushing wind swept over them in a hurricane.

The *Caroline* received the blast like a stout and buoyant ship as she was, yielding to its impulse until her side lay nearly incumbent on the element; and then, as if the fearful fabric were conscious of its jeopardy, it seemed to lift its reclining masts again, struggling to work its way through the water.

"Keep the helm a-weather! Jam it a-weather for your life!" shouted Wilder, amid the roar of the gust.

The veteran seaman at the wheel obeyed the order with steadiness, but in vain did he keep his eyes on the margin of his head sail, to watch the manner in which the ship would obey its power. Twice more, in as many moments, the giddy masts fell towards the horizon, waving as often gracefully upward, and then they yielded to the mighty pressure of the wind, until the whole machine lay prostrate on the water.

"Be cool!" said Wilder, seizing the bewildered Earing by the arm, as the latter rushed madly up the steep of the deck; "It is our duty to be calm; bring hither an ax."

Quick as the thought which gave the order, the admonished mate complied, jumping into the mizzen-channels of the ship to execute with his own hands the mandate that he knew must follow.

"Shall I cut?" he demanded, with uplifted arms, and in a voice that atoned his momentary confusion, by its steadiness and force.

"Hold! Does the ship mind her helm at all?"

"Not an inch, sir."

"Then cut!" Wilder clearly and calmly added.

A single blow sufficed for the discharge of this important duty. Extended to the utmost powers of endurance, by the vast weight it upheld, the lanyard struck by Earing no sooner parted than each of its fellows snapped in succession, leaving the mast dependent on its wood for the support of all the ponderous and complicated hamper it upheld. The cracking of the spar came next; and the whole fell, like a tree that had been snapped at its foundation.

"Does she fall off!" called Wilder to the observant seaman at the wheel.

"She yielded a little, sir; but this new squall is bringing her up again."

"Shall I cut?" shouted Earing from the main rigging, whither he had leaped like a tiger who had bounded on his prey.

"Cut!"

A louder and more imposing crash succeeded this order, though not before several heavy blows had been struck into the massive mast itself. As before, the sea received the tumbling mass of spars, rigging, and sails; the vessel surging, at the same instant, from its recumbent position, and rolling far and heavily to windward.

"She rights! she rights!" exclaimed twenty voices which had been mute, in a suspense that involved life and death.

"Keep her dead away!" added the calm but authoritative voice of the young commander. "Stand by to furl the fore-top-sail—let it hang a moment to drag the ship clear of the wreck—cut, cut—cheerily, men—hatchets and knives—cut *with* all, and cut *off* all!"

As the men now worked with the vigor of hope, the ropes that still confined the fallen spars to the vessel were quickly severed; and the *Caroline*, by this time dead before the gale, appeared barely to touch the foam that covered the sea. The wind came over the waste in gusts that rumbled like distant thunder, and with a power that seemed to threaten to lift the ship from its proper element. As a prudent and sagacious seaman had let fly the halyards of the solitary sail that remained, at the moment the squall approached, the loosened but lowered top-sail was now distended in a manner that

threatened to drag after it the only mast which still stood. Wilder saw the necessity of getting rid of the sail, and he also saw the utter impossibility of securing it. Calling Earing to his side, he pointed out the danger, and gave the necessary order.

"The spar cannot stand such shocks much longer," he concluded; "should it go over the bows, some fatal blow might be given to the ship at the rate she is moving. A man or two must be sent aloft to cut the sail from the yards."

"The stick is bending like a willow whip," returned the mate, "and the lower mast itself is sprung. There would be great danger in trusting a hand in that top, while these wild squalls are breathing around us."

"You may be right," returned Wilder, with a sudden conviction of the truth of what the other had said. "Stay you then here; if anything befall me, try to get the vessel into port as far north as the Capes of Virginia, at least; on no account attempt Hatteras, in the present condition of——"

"What would you do, Captain Wilder?" interrupted the mate, laying his hand on the shoulder of his commander, who had already thrown his sea-cap on the deck, and was preparing to divest himself of some of his outer garments.

"I go aloft to ease the mast of that topsail, without which we lose the spar, and possibly the ship."

"I see that plain enough, sir; but shall it be said that another did the duty of Edward Earing? It is your business to carry the vessel into the Capes of Virginia, and mine to cut the topsail adrift. If harm comes to me, why, put it in the log, with a word or two about the manner in which I played my part. That is the most proper epitaph for a sailor."

Wilder made no resistance. He resumed his watchful and reflecting attitude, with the simplicity of one who had been too long trained to the discharge of certain obligations himself to manifest surprise that another should acknowledge their imperative character. In the meantime, Earing proceeded steadily to perform what he had just promised. Passing into the waist of the ship, he provided himself with a suitable hatchet, and then, without speaking a syllable to any of the mute but attentive seamen, he sprang into the fore-rigging, every strand and rope-yarn of which was tightened by the strain nearly to snapping. The understanding eyes of his observers comprehended his intention; and with precisely the same pride of station as had urged him to the dangerous undertaking, four or five of the oldest mariners jumped upon the ratlines, to mount into an air that apparently teemed with a hundred hurricanes.

"Lie down out of that fore-rigging," shouted Wilder, through a deck trumpet; "lie down; all, but the mate, lie down!" His words were borne past the inattentive ears of the excited and mortified followers of Earing, but for once they failed of their effect. Each man was too earnestly bent on his purpose to listen to the sounds of recall. In less than a minute, the whole were scattered along the yards, prepared to obey the signal of their officer. The mate cast a look about him; perceiving that the time was comparatively favorable, he struck a blow upon the large rope that confined one of the lower angles of the distended and bursting sail to the yard. The effect was much the same as would be produced by knocking away the keystone of an ill-cemented arch. The canvas broke from its fastenings with a loud explosion, and, for an instant, it was seen sailing in the air ahead of the ship, as if it were sustained on wings. The vessel rose on a sluggish wave—the lingering remains of the former breeze—and settled heavily over the rolling surge, borne down alike by its own weight and the renewed violence of the gusts. At this critical instant, while the seamen aloft were still gazing in the direction in which the little cloud of canvas had disappeared, a lanyard of the lower rigging parted, with a crack that reached the ears of Wilder.

"Lie down!" he shouted wildly through his trumpet; "down by the backstays; down for your lives; every man of you, down!"

A solitary individual profited by the

warning, gliding to the deck with the velocity of the wind. But rope parted after rope, and the fatal snapping of the wood followed. For a moment the towering maze tottered, seeming to wave toward every quarter of the heavens; and then, yielding to the movements of the hull, the whole fell, with a heavy crash, into the sea. Cord, lanyard, and stay snapped like thread, as each received in succession the strain of the ship, leaving the naked and despoiled hull of the *Caroline* to drive before the tempest, as if nothing had occurred to impede its progress.

A mute and eloquent pause succeeded the disaster. It seemed as if the elements themselves were appeased by their work, and something like a momentary lull in the awful rushing of the winds might have been fancied. Wilder sprang to the side of the vessel, and distinctly beheld the victims, who still clung to their frail support. He even saw Earing waving his hand, in adieu, with a seaman's heart, like a man who not only felt how desperate was his situation, but who knew how to meet it with resignation. Then the wreck of spars, with all who clung to it, was swallowed up in the body of the frightful, preternatural-looking mist which extended on every side of them, from the ocean to the clouds.

"Stand by, to clear away a boat!" shouted Wilder, without pausing to think of the impossibility of one's swimming, or of effecting the least good, in so violent a tornado.

But the amazed and confounded seamen who remained needed no instruction in the matter. Not a man moved, nor was the smallest symptom of obedience given. The mariners looked wildly around them, each endeavoring to trace in the dusky countenance of some shipmate his opinion of the extent of the evil; but not a mouth opened among them all.

"It is too late—it is too late!" murmured Wilder; "human skill and human efforts could not save them!"

"Sail, ho!" Knighthead shouted in a voice that was teeming with superstitious awe.

"Let him come on," returned his young commander, bitterly; "the mischief is ready done to his hands!"

"Should this be a true ship, it is our duty to the owners and the passengers to speak her, if a man can make his voice heard in this tempest," the second mate continued, pointing, through the haze, at the dim object that was certainly at hand.

"Speak her! passengers!" muttered Wilder, involuntarily repeating his words. "No; anything is better than speaking her. Do you see the vessel that is driving down upon us so fast?" he sternly demanded of the watchful seaman who still clung to the wheel of the *Caroline*.

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"Give her a berth—sheer away hard to port—perhaps he may pass us in the gloom, now we are no higher than our decks. Give the ship a broad sheer, sir."

The usual laconic answer was given; and, for a few moments, the Bristol trader was seen diverging a little from the line in which the other approached; but a second glance assured Wilder that the attempt was useless. The strange ship (every man on board felt certain that it was the same that had so long been seen hanging in the northwestern horizon) came on through the mist, with a swiftness that nearly equaled the velocity of the tempestuous winds themselves. Not a thread of canvas was seen on board her. Each line of spars, even to the delicate and tapering top-gallant masts, was in its place, preserving the beauty and symmetry of the whole fabric; but nowherewas there the smallest fragment of a sail opened to the gale. Under her bows rolled a volume of foam that was even discernible amid the universal agitation of the ocean; and, as she came within sound, the sullen roar might have been likened to the noise of a cascade. At first, the spectators on the decks of the *Caroline* believed they were not seen, and some of the men called madly for lights, in order that the disasters of the night might not terminate in an encounter.

"Too many see us there already," said Wilder.

"No, no," muttered Knighthead; "no fear but we are seen; and by such eyes,

too, as never yet looked out of mortal head!"

The seamen paused. In another instant, the long-seen and mysterious ship was within a hundred feet of them. The very power of that wind, which was wont usually to raise the billows, now pressed the element, with the weight of mountains, into its bed. The sea was everywhere a sea of froth, but the water did not rise above the level of the surface. The instant a wave lifted itself from the security of the vast depths, the fluid was borne away before the tornado in glittering spray. Along this frothy, but comparatively motionless surface, then, the stranger came booming with the steadiness and grandeur with which a cloud is seen sailing in the hurricane. No sign of life was discovered about her. If men looked out from their secret places, upon the straitened and discomfited wreck of the Bristol trader, it was covertly, and as darkly as the storm before which they drove. Wilder held his breath for the moment the stranger was nighest, in the very excess of suspense; but, as he saw no signal of recognition, no human form, nor any intention to arrest, if possible, the furious career of the other, a smile gleamed across his countenance, and his lips moved rapidly, as if he found pleasure in being abandoned to his distress. The stranger drove by, like a dark vision; and, ere another minute, her form was beginning to grow less distinct, in the body of spray to leeward.

"She is going out of sight in the mist!" exclaimed Wilder, when he drew his breath, after the fearful suspense of the last few moments.

"Aye, in the mist or clouds," responded Knighthead, who now kept obstinately at his elbow, watching with the most jealous distrust the smallest movement of his unknown commander.

"In the heavens, or the sea, I care not, provided he be gone."

"Most seamen would rejoice to see a strange sail, from the hull of a vessel shaved to the deck like this?"

"Men often court their destruction, from ignorance of their own interests. Let him drive on, say I, and pray I! He goes four feet to our one; and I ask no better favor than that this hurricane may blow until the sun shall rise."

Knighthead started, and cast an oblique glance, which resembled denunciation, at his companion. To his superstitious mind, there was profanity in thus invoking the tempest, at a moment when the winds seemed already to be pouring out their utmost wrath.

"This is a heavy squall, I will allow," he said, "and such a one as many mariners pass whole lives without seeing; but he knows little of the sea who thinks there is not more wind where this comes from."

"Let it blow!" cried the other, striking his hands together a little wildly; "I pray for wind!"

All the doubts of Knighthead, as to the character of the young stranger who had so unaccountably got possession of the office of Nicholas Nichols, if any remained, were no wremoved. He walked forward among the silent and thoughtful crew with the air of a man whose opinion was settled. Wilder, however, paid no attention to the movements of his subordinate, but continued pacing the deck for hours; now casting his eyes at the heavens, and now sending frequent and anxious glances around the limited horizon, while the *Royal Caroline* still continued drifting before the wind, a shorn and naked wreck.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Sit still, and hear the last of our sea sorrow."
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE weight of the tempest had been felt at that hapless moment when Earing and his unfortunate companions were precipitated from their giddy elevation into the sea. Though the wind continued to blow long after this fatal event, it was with a constantly diminishing power. As the gale decreased, the sea began to rise, and the vessel to labor in proportion. Then followed two hours of anxious watchfulness on the part of Wilder, during which the whole of his professional knowledge

was needed, in order to keep the despoiled hull from becoming a prey to the greedy waters. His consummate skill, however, proved equal to the task that was required at his hands; and just as the symptoms of the day were becoming visible along the east, both wind and waves were rapidly subsiding together. During the whole of this doubtful period, our adventurer did not receive the smallest assistance from any of the crew, with the exception of two experienced seamen whom he had previously stationed at the wheel. But to this neglect he was indifferent; since little more was required than his own judgment, seconded, as it faithfully was, by the exertions of the mariners more immediately under his eye.

The day dawned on a scene entirely different from that which had marked the tempestuous deformity of the night. The whole fury of the winds appeared to have been expended in their precocious effort. From the moderate gale, to which they had fallen by the end of the middle watch, they further altered to a vacillating breeze; and, ere the sun rose, the changeful element subsided into a flat calm. The sea went down as suddenly as the power which had raised it vanished; and by the time the broad golden light of the sun was shed fairly and fully upon the unstable ocean, it lay unruffled and polished, though still gently heaving in swells so long and heavy as to resemble the placid respiration of a sleeping infant.

The hour was still early, and the serene appearance of the sky gave every promise of a day which might be passed in devising the expedients necessary to bring the ship under the command of her people.

"Sound the pumps!" said Wilder, observing that the crew were appearing from the different places in which they had bestowed their cares and their persons together, during the later hours of the night.

"Do you hear me, sir?" he added sternly, observing that no one moved to obey his order. "Let the pumps be sounded, and the ship cleared of every inch of water."

Knighthead, to whom Wilder addressed himself, regarded his commander with an oblique and sullen eye, exchanging intelligent glances with his comrades before he saw fit to make the smallest motion toward compliance. But there was still that in the authoritative mien of his superior which induced him to comply. The dilatory manner in which the seamen performed the duty was quickened, however, as the rod ascended, and the well known signs of a formidable leak met their eyes. The experiment was repeated with greater activity, and with more precision.

"If witchcraft can clear the hold of a ship that is already half full of water," said Knighthead, casting another menacing glance toward the attentive Wilder, "the sooner it is done the better; for the whole cunning of something more than a bungler will be needed to make the pumps of the *Royal Caroline* suck!"

"Does the ship leak?" demanded his superior, with a quickness which proclaimed how important the intelligence was deemed.

"Yesterday, I would have boldly put my name to the articles of any craft that floats the ocean; and, had the captain asked me if I understood her nature and character, as certain as that my name is Francis Knighthood, I should have told him, yes. But I find that the oldest seaman may still learn something of the water; though it should be got in crossing a ferry in a flat."

"What mean you, sir?" demanded Wilder, who, for the first time, began to note the mutinous looks assumed by his mate, no less than the threatening manner in which he was seconded by the crew. "Have the pumps rigged without delay, and clear the ship of water."

Knighthead slowly complied with the former part of this order; and, in a few moments, everything was arranged to commence the necessary, and, as it would seem, the urgent duty of pumping. But no man lifted his hand to the laborious employment. Wilder, who had taken the alarm, was not slow in detecting this reluctance, as he repeated the order more sternly, calling on two of the seamen, by name, to set the example of obedience.

The men hesitated, giving an opportunity to the mate to confirm them by his voice in their mutinous intentions.

"What need of hands to work a pump in a vessel like this," he said, coarsely laughing, secret terror struggling strangely at the same time with open malice. "After what we have seen this night, none here will be amazed should the vessel begin to spout the brine like a whale."

"What am I to understand by this hesitation and by this language?" said Wilder, approaching Knighthead with a firm step, and an eye that threw back the defiance of his inferior, in a more than equal measure. "Is it you, who should be foremost in an exertion in a moment like this, who dare to set an example for disobedience?"

The mate recoiled a pace, and his lips moved; still he uttered no audible reply. Wilder ordered him, in a calm authoritative tone, to lay his own hands to the brake. Knighthead then found his voice, making a flat refusal. At the next moment he was felled to the feet of his indignant commander, by a blow he had neither the address nor the power to resist. This act of decision was succeeded by a single moment of breathless indecision among the crew; and then the common cry, and the general rush upon our defenseless and solitary adventurer, were signals for open hostilities.

A shriek from the quarter-deck arrested the struggle, just as a dozen hands were laid violently upon the person of Wilder, and, for the moment, there was a truce. The cry came from Gertrude, and happily it possessed sufficient influence to check the savage intentions of a set of beings rude and unnurtured enough to be guilty of any act of violence when their passions were thoroughly aroused. Wilder was reluctantly released; and the surly mariners turned toward her whose interference had stopped, if it had not changed their intentions.

During the more momentous hours of the night that was past, the very existence of the passengers had been forgotten by those whose duty kept them on deck. If they had been recalled at all to the recollection of any, it was at those fleeting moments when the mind of the young seaman, who directed the movements of the ship, found leisure to catch stolen glimpses of softer scenes than the wild warring of the elements that was raging before his eyes. Knighthead had named them, as he would have made allusions to a part of the cargo, but their fate had little influence on his hardened nature. Mrs. Wyllys and her charge had therefore remained below during the whole period, perfectly unapprised of the disasters of the intervening time. Buried in the recesses of their berths, they had heard the roaring of the winds, and the incessant washing of the waters; but these usual accompaniments of a storm served to conceal the crashing of masts, and the hoarse cries of the mariners. During the moments of terrible suspense, while the Bristol trader lay on her side, the better-informed governess had, indeed, some fearful glimmerings of the truth; but, conscious of her uselessness, and, unwilling to alarm her less instructed companion, she had sufficient self-command to be mute. The subsequent silence, and comparative calm, induced her to believe that she had been mistaken in her apprehensions; and, long ere morning dawned, both she and Gertrude had sunk into refreshing slumbers. They had risen and mounted to the deck together, and were still in the first burst of their wonder at the desolation which met their eyes, when the long-meditated attack on Wilder was made.

"What means this awful change?" demanded Mrs. Wyllys, with a lip that quivered, and a cheek which, notwithstanding the extraordinary power she possessed over her feelings, was blanched to the color of death.

The eye of Wilder was glowing, and his brow was dark as those heavens from which they had so happily escaped, as he answered, still menacing his assailants with an arm—

"It means mutiny, madam—rascally, cowardly mutiny!"

"Could mutiny strip a vessel of her masts, and leave her a helpless log upon the sea?"

"Hark ye, madam!" roughly interrupted the mate; "to you I will speak freely; for it is well known who you are, and that you came on board the *Caroline* a paying passenger. This night I have seen the heavens and the ocean behave as I have never seen them behave before. Ships have been running afore the wind, light and buoyant as corks, with all their spars stepped and ready, when other ships have been shaved of every mast as the razor sweeps the chin. Cruisers have been fallen in with, sailing without living hands to work them; and, altogether, no man here has ever passed a middle watch like the one gone by."

"And what has this to do with the violence I have just witnessed? Is the vessel fated to endure every evil? Can *you* explain this, Mr. Wilder?"

"You cannot say, at least, you had no warning of danger," returned Wilder, bitterly.

"Aye, the devil is obliged to be honest on compulsion," resumed the mate. "Each of his imps sails with his orders; and, thank Heaven! however willing he may be to overlook them, he has neither courage nor power to do so. Otherwise, a peaceful voyage would be such a rarity in these unsettled times, that few men would be found hardy enough to venture on the water for a livelihood. A warning! we will own you gave us open and frequent warning. It was a notice that the consignee should not have overlooked, when Nicholas Nichols met with the hurt as the anchor was leaving the bottom. I never knew an accident happen at such a time, and no evil come of it. Then we had a warning with the old man in the boat; besides the never-failing ill-luck of sending the pilot violently out of the ship. As if all this wasn't enough, instead of taking a hint and lying peaceably at our anchors, we got the ship under way, and left a safe and friendly harbor of a Friday, of all the days in a week.* So far from being surprised at what has happened, I only wonder at still finding myself a living man; the reason of which is simply this, that I have given my faith where faith is due, and not to unknown mariners and strange commanders. Had Edward Earing done the same, he might still have had a plank between him and the bottom; but, though half inclined to believe in the truth, he had, after all, too much leaning to superstition and credulity."

This labored profession of faith in the mate, though sufficiently intelligible to Wilder, was still an enigma to his female listeners. But Knighthead had not formed his resolution by halves; neither had he gone thus far with any intention to stop short of the whole design. In summary words he explained to Mrs. Wyllys the desolate condition of the ship, and the utter improbability that she could continue to float many hours; since actual observation had told him that her lower hold was already half full of water.

"And what is to be done?" demanded the governess, casting a glance of bitter distress toward the pallid and attentive Gertrude. "Is there no strange sail in sight to take us from the wreck? or must we perish in our helplessness?"

"God protect us from any more strange sails!" exclaimed the surly Knighthead. "We have the pinnace hanging at the stern, and there must be land some forty leagues to the northwest; water and food are plenty, and twelve stout hands can soon pull a boat to the continent of America; that is, provided America is left where it was seen no later than at sunset yesterday."

"You propose to abandon the vessel?"

"I do. The interest of the owners is dear to all good seamen, but life is sweeter than gold."

"The will of Heaven be done! But surely you meditate no violence against this gentleman, who, I am quite certain,

* The superstition that Friday is an evil day was not peculiar to Knighthead; it prevails, more or less, among seamen, to this hour. An intelligent merchant of Connecticut had a desire to do his part in eradicating an impression that is sometimes inconvenient. He caused the keel of a vessel to be laid on a Friday; she was launched on a Friday; named *The Friday*; and sailed her first voyage on a Friday. Unfortunately for the success of this well-intentioned experiment, neither vessel nor crew were ever again heard of!

has governed the vessel, in very critical circumstances, with a discretion beyond his years!"

Knighthead muttered his intentions, whatever they might be, to himself; and he walked apart, apparently to confer with the men, who seemed too well disposed to second any of his views, however mistaken or lawless. During the few moments of suspense that succeeded, Wilder was silent and composed, a smile resembling that of contempt struggling about his lip, and maintaining the air rather of one who had power to decide on the fortunes of others, than of a man who knew that his own fate was at that very moment in discussion. When the dull minds of the seamen had arrived at their conclusion, the mate advanced to proclaim the result. Indeed, words were unnecessary, in order to make known a very material part of their decision; for some of the men proceeded instantly to lower the stern-boat into the water, while others set about supplying it with the necessary means of subsistence.

"There is room for all the Christians in the ship to stow themselves in this pinnace," resumed Knighthead; "as for those that place their dependence on any particular persons, why, let them call for aid where they have been used to receive it."

"From all which I am to infer that it is your intention," said Wilder calmly, "to abandon the wreck and your duty?"

The half-awed but still resentful mate returned a look in which fear and triumph struggled for the mastery, as he answered—

"You, who know how to sail a ship without a crew, can never want a boat! Besides, you shall never say to your friends, whoever they may be, that we leave you without the means of reaching the land, if you are indeed a landbird at all. There is the launch!"

"There is the launch! but well do you know, that, without masts, our united strengths could not lift it from the deck; else would it not be left."

"They that took the masts out of the *Caroline* can put them in again," rejoined a grinning seaman; "it will not be an hour after we leave you, before a shear-hulk will come alongside to step the spars again, and then you may go cruise in company."

Wilder was superior to a reply. He began to pace the deck, thoughtful, it is true, but composed and entirely self-possessed. In the meantime, as a common desire to quit the wreck as soon as possible actuated the men, their preparations advanced with activity. The wondering and alarmed females had hardly time to think clearly on the extraordinary situation in which they found themselves, before they saw the form of the helpless master born past them to the boat; in another minute they were summoned to take their places at his side.

Thus called upon to act, they began to feel the imperious necessity of decision. Remonstrances they feared would be useless; for the fierce and malignant looks which were cast, from time to time, at Wilder as the labor proceeded, proclaimed the danger of awakening such obstinate and ignorant minds into renewed acts of violence. The governess bethought her of an appeal to the wounded man; but the look of wild care which he had cast about him, on being lifted to the deck, and the expression of bodily and mental pain that gleamed across his rugged features, as he buried them in the blankets by which he was enveloped, too plainly announced that little assistance was to be expected from him.

"What remains for us to do?" she at length demanded of the seemingly insensible object of her concern.

"I would I knew!" he answered quickly, casting a keen but hurried glance around the whole horizon. "It is not at all improbable that they will reach the shore. Four-and-twenty hours of calm will assure it."

"If otherwise?"

"A blow at northwest, or from any quarter off the land, will prove their ruin."

"And the ship?"

"If deserted, she must sink."

"Then will I speak in your favor to

these hearts of flint! I know not why I feel such interest in your welfare, inexplicable young man; but I would suffer much, rather than leave you to incur this peril."

"Stop, dearest madam," said Wilder, respectfully arresting her movement with his hand. "I cannot leave the vessel."

"We know not yet. The most stubborn natures may be subdued; even ignorance can be made to open its ears at the voice of entreaty. I may prevail."

"There is one temper to be quelled—one reason to convince—one prejudice to conquer, over which you have no power."

"Whose is that?"

"My own."

"What mean you, sir? Surely you are not weak enough to suffer resentment against such beings to goad you to an act of madness?"

"Do I seem mad?" demanded Wilder. "The feeling by which I am governed may be false, but, such as it is, it is grafted on my habits, my opinions—I will say, my principles. Honor forbids me to quit a ship that I command, while a plank of her is afloat."

"Of what use can a single arm prove at such a crisis?"

"None," he answered, with a melancholy smile. "I must die, in order that others, who may be serviceable hereafter, should do their duty."

Both Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude regarded his friendly eye, but otherwise placid countenance, with looks whose concern amounted to horror. The former read, in the very composure of his mien, the unalterable character of his resolution; and the latter, shuddering as the prospect of the cruel fate which awaited him crowded on her mind, felt a glow about her own youthful heart that almost tempted her to believe his self-devotion commendable. But the governess saw new reasons for apprehension in the determination of Wilder. If she had hitherto felt reluctance to trust herself and her ward with a band like that which now possessed the sole authority, it was more than doubly increased by the rude and noisy summons she received to hasten and take her place among them.

"Would to Heaven I knew in what manner to decide!" she exclaimed. "Speak to us, young man; counsel us, as you would counsel a mother and a sister."

"Were I so fortunate as to possess relatives so near and dear, nothing should separate us at a time like this."

"Is there hope for those who remain on the wreck?"

"But little."

"And in the boat?"

It was near a minute before Wilder made an answer. He again turned his eye to the bright and broad horizon, studying the heavens, in the direction of the distant continent, with infinite care. No omen that could indicate the probable character of the weather escaped his vigilance, while his countenance reflected the various emotions by which he was governed.

"As I am a man," he said with fervor, "and one who is bound not only to counsel but to protect your sex, I distrust the time. I think the chance of being seen by some passing sail equal to the probability that those who adventure in the pinnace will ever reach the land."

"Then let us remain," said Gertrude, the blood, for the first time since her reappearance on deck, rushing in a torrent into her colorless cheeks. "I like not the wretches who would be our companions in that boat."

"Away, away!" impatiently shouted Knighthead. "Each minute of light is a week of life to us all, and every moment of calm, a year. Away, away, or we leave you!"

Mrs. Wyllys answered not, but she stood the image of doubt and indecision. The plash of oars was heard in the water, and, at the next moment, the pinnace was seen gliding over the element, impelled by the strong arms of six powerful rowers.

"Stay!" shrieked the governess, no longer undetermined, "receive my child, though you abandon me!"

A wave of the hand, and an indistinct rumbling in the coarse tones of the mate, were the answers to her appeal. A long, deep, and breathing silence followed among the deserted. The grim countenances of the seamen in the pinnace soon

became confused and indistinct, and then the boat itself began to lessen on the eye, until it seemed no more than a dark and distant speck, rising and falling with the flow and reflux of the blue waters. During all this time, not even a whispered word was spoken. Each of the party gazed, until eyes grew dim, at the receding object; and it was only when his sight refused to convey the tiny image to his brain, that Wilder himself shook off the impression of the trance into which he had fallen. His look then turned on his companions, and he pressed his hand upon his forehead, as if the brain were bewildered by the responsibility he had assumed in advising them to remain. But the sickening apprehension passed away, leaving in its place a firmer mind, and a resolution, too often tried in scenes of doubtful issue, to be long or easily shaken from its calmness and self-possession.

"They are gone!" he said, breathing heavily, like one whose respiration had been long and unnaturally suspended.

"They are gone!" echoed the governess, turning an eye that was contracting with the intensity of her care, on the marble-like and motionless form of her pupil. "There is no longer hope!"

The look that Wilder threw on the same silent but lovely statue was scarcely less expressive than the gaze of her who had nurtured her infancy. His brow grew thoughtful and his lips became compressed, while he gathered all the resources of his fertile imagination and varied experience.

"Is there hope?" demanded the governess, who was watching the change of his working countenance, with an attention that never swerved.

The gloom passed away from his features, and the smile that lighted them was like the radiance of the sun, as it breaks through the blackest vapors of the gust.

"There is!" he said, with firmness; "our case is not yet desperate."

"Then may He who rules the ocean and the land receive the praise!" cried the grateful governess, giving vent to her long-suppressed agony in a flood of tears.

Gertrude cast herself upon the neck of Mrs. Wyllys, and for a minute their unrestrained emotions were mingled.

"And now, dearest madam," said Gertrude, leaving the arms of her governess, "let us trust to the skill of Mr. Wilder; he has foreseen and foretold this danger; equally well may he predict our safety."

"Foreseen and foretold!" returned the other, in a manner to show that her faith in the professional prescience of the stanger was not altogether so unbounded as that of her more youthful and ardent companion. "No mortal could have foreseen this awful calamity; and, least of all, foreseeing it, would he have sought to incur its danger! Mr. Wilder, I will not annoy you with requests for explanations that might now be useless, but you will not refuse to communicate your grounds of hope."

Wilder hastened to relieve a curiosity that he knew must be as painful as it was natural. The mutineers had left the largest and much the safest, of the two boats belonging to the wreck, from a desire to improve the calm, well knowing that hours of severe labor would be necessary to launch it into the ocean from the place it occupied between the stumps of the two principal masts. This operation, which might have been executed in a few minutes with the ordinary purchases of the ship, would have required all their strength united, and that, too, to be executed with a discretion and care that would have consumed too many of those moments which they rightly deemed to be so precious at that wild and unstable season of the year. Into this little ark Wilder proposed to convey such articles of comfort and necessity as he might hastily collect from the abandoned vessel; and then, entering it with his companions, to await the critical instant when the wreck should sink from beneath them.

"Call you this hope?" exclaimed Mrs. Wyllys, when his short explanation was ended, her cheek blanching with disappointment. "I have heard that the gulf, which foundering vessels leave, swallows all lesser objects that are floating nigh!"

"It sometimes happens. For worlds

I would not deceive you; and I now say that I think our chance for escape equal to that of being engulfed with the vessel."

"This is terrible!" murmured the governess; "but the will of Heaven be done! Cannot ingenuity supply the place of strength, and the boat be cast from the decks before the fatal moment shall arrive?"

Wilder shook his head in the negative.

"We are not so weak as you may think us," said Gertrude. "Give a direction to our efforts, and let us see what yet may be done. Here is Cassandra," she added, turning to the black girl already introduced to the reader, who stood behind her young and ardent mistress with the mantle and shawls of the latter thrown over her arm, as if about to attend her on an excursion for the morning, "here is Cassandra, who alone has nearly the strength of a man."

"Had she the strength of twenty, I should despair of launching the boat without the aid of machinery. But we lose time in words; I will go below in order to judge of the probable duration of our doubt; and then to our preparations. Even you, fair and fragile as you seem, lovely being, may aid in the latter."

He then pointed out such lighter objects as would be necessary to their comfort, should they be so fortunate as to get clear of the wreck, and advised their being put into the boat without delay. While the three females were thus usefully employed, he descended into the hold of the ship, in order to note the increase of the water, and to make his calculations on the time that would elapse before the sinking fabric must entirely disappear. The fact proved their case to be more alarming than even Wilder had been led to expect.

Stripped of her masts, the vessel had labored so heavily as to open many of her seams; and, as the upper works began to settle beneath the level of the ocean, the influx of the element was increasing with frightful rapidity. As the young mariner looked understandingly about him, he cursed, in the bitterness of his heart, the ignorance and superstition that had caused the desertion of the crew. There existed, in reality, no evil that exertion and skill could not have remedied; but, deprived of aid, he saw the folly of even attempting to procrastinate a catastrophe that was now unavoidable. Returning with a heavy heart to the deck, he immediately set about those dispositions which were necessary to afford them the only chance of escape.

While his companions deadened the sense of apprehension by their lighter employment, Wilder stepped the two masts of the boat, and disposed of the sails and the other implements that might be useful in the event of success. Thus occupied, a couple of hours flew by, as if minutes were compressed into moments. At the expiration of that period, his labor ceased. He then cut the gripes that had kept the launch in its place when the ship was in motion, leaving it standing upright on its wooden beds, but in no other manner connected with the hull, which, by this time, had settled so low as to create the apprehension that, at any moment, it might sink from beneath them. After this measure of precaution was taken, the females were summoned to the boat, lest the crisis might be nearer than he supposed; for he well knew that a foundering ship was like a tottering wall, liable at any moment to yield to the impulse of the downward pressure.

He then commenced the scarcely less necessary operation of selection among the chaos of articles with which the ill-directed zeal of his companions had so cumbered the boat that there was hardly room to dispose of their more precious persons. Notwithstanding the often repeated and vociferous remonstrances of the negress, boxes, trunks, and packages flew from the launch, Wilder having no consideration for more than their ultimate safety. The boat was soon cleared of what, under their circumstances, was literally lumber; leaving, however, far more than enough to meet all their wants, and not a few of their comforts, in the event that they should escape the greedy element.

Then, and not till then, did the exertions of Wilder relax. He had arranged his

sails, ready to be hoisted in an instant; he had carefully examined that no straggling rope connected the boat to the wreck, to draw them under with the foundering mass; and he had assured himself that food, water, compass, and the imperfect instruments that were then in use to ascertain the position of a ship, were carefully disposed of in their several places, and ready to his hand. When all was in a state of preparation, he disposed of himself in the stern of the boat, and endeavored, by the composure of his manner, to inspire his less resolute companions with a portion of his own firmness.

The bright sunshine was sleeping in a thousand places on every side of the silent and deserted wreck. The sea had subsided to such a state of rest that it was only at long intervals that the huge and helpless mass on which the ark of the expectants lay was lifted from its dull quietude, to roll heavily, for a moment, in the washing waters, and then to settle lower and lower into the absorbing element. Still the disappearance of the hull was slow—it was even tedious to those who looked forward with so much impatience to its total immersion, as to the crisis of their own fortunes.

During these hours of weary and awful suspense, the discourse between the watchers, though conducted in tones of confidence, and often of tenderness, was broken by long intervals of musing silence. Each forebore to dwell upon the danger of their situation, in consideration of the feelings of the rest; but neither could conceal the imminent risk they ran, from that jealous love of life which was common to them all. In this manner, minutes, hours, and the day itself, rolled by, and the darkness was seen stealing along the deep, gradually narrowing the boundary of their view toward the east, until the whole of the empty scene was limited to a little dusky circle around the spot on which they lay. To this change succeeded another fearful hour, during which it appeared that death was about to visit them, environed by its most revolting horrors.

The heavy plunge of the wallowing whale, as he cast his huge form upon the surface of the sea, was heard, accompanied by the mimic blowings of a hundred imitators that followed in the train of the monarch of the ocean. It appeared to the alarmed and feverish imagination of Gertrude that the brine was giving up all its monsters; and notwithstanding the calm assurances of Wilder that these accustomed sounds were rather the harbingers of peace than signs of any new danger, they filled her mind with images of the secret recesses over which they seemed suspended by a thread, and painted them replete with the disgusting inhabitants of the caverns of the deep. The intelligent seaman himself was startled, when he saw on the dark surface of the water the dark fins of the voracious shark stealing around the wreck, apprised by his instinct that the contents of the devoted vessel were shortly to become the prey of his tribe. Then came the moon, with its mild and deceptive light, to throw the delusion of its glow on the varying but frightful scene.

"See," said Wilder, as the luminary lifted its pale and melancholy orb out of the bed of the ocean; "we shall at least have a light for our hazardous launch!"

"Is it at hand?" demanded Mrs. Wyllys, summoning all the resolution she could in so trying a situation.

"It is. The ship has already brought her scuppers to the water. Sometimes a vessel will float until saturated with the brine. If ours sink at all, it will be soon."

"If at all! Is there the smallest hope that she can float?"

"None!" said Wilder, pausing to listen to the hollow sounds which issued from the depths of the vessel, as the water broke through her divisions, in passing from side to side, and which sounded like the groaning of some heavy monster in the last agony of nature. "None; she is already losing her level!"

His companions saw the change; but not for the empire of the world could either of them have uttered a syllable. Another low, threatening, rumbling sound was heard, and the pent air beneath blew

up the forward part of the deck, with an explosion like that of a gun.

"Now grasp the ropes I have given you!" cried Wilder, breathless with his eagerness to speak.

His words were smothered by the rushing and gurgling of waters. The vessel made a plunge like a dying whale; and, raising its stern high into the air, it glided into the depths of the sea, like the leviathan seeking his secret places. The motionless boat was lifted with the ship, until it stood in an attitude fearfully approaching to the perpendicular. As the wreck descended, the bows of the launch met the element, burying themselves nearly to filling; but, buoyant and light, they rose again, and struck powerfully on the stern by the settling mass, the little ark shot ahead, as if driven by the hand of man. Still, as the water rushed into the vortex, everything within its influence yielded to the suction; and, at the next instant, the launch was seen darting down the declivity, as if eager to follow the vast machine of which it had so long formed a dependent, through the same gaping whirlpool, to the bottom; but it rose, rocking, to the surface, and, for a moment, was tossed and whirled like the bubble in the eddies of a pool; after which the ocean moaned and slept again.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Every day some sailor's wife,
The masters of some merchant, and the merchant,
Have just our theme of woe."—TEMPEST.

"WE are safe!" said Wilder, who had stood with his person firmly braced against a mast, steadily watching the manner of their escape. "Thus far, at least, we are safe; for which may Heaven alone be praised, since no art of mine could avail us a feather."

The females had buried their faces in the folds of the vestments and clothes on which they were sitting; nor did even the governess raise her countenance, until twice assured by her companion that the imminency of the risk was past. Another minute went by, during which Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude were rendering their thanksgivings, in a manner and in words less equivocal than the expression which had just broken from the lips of the young seaman. When this grateful duty was performed, they stood erect, as if emboldened, by the offering, to look their situation more steadily in the face.

On every side lay the seemingly illimitable waste of waters. To them, their small and frail tenement was the world. So long as the ship, sinking and dangerous as she was, remained beneath them, there had appeared a barrier between their existence and the ocean. A single minute had deprived them of even this failing support, and they now found themselves cast upon the sea in a vessel that might be likened to one of the bubbles of the element. Gertrude felt, at that instant, that she would have given half her hopes in life for the mere sight of the vast and nearly untenanted continent which stretched for so many thousands of miles along the west, and kept the world of waters to their limits.

But the rush of emotions that belonged to their forlorn condition soon subsided, and their thoughts returned to the study of the means necessary to further safety. Wilder had anticipated these feelings; and, even before Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude recovered their recollections, he was occupied, aided by the terrified and loquacious Cassandra, in arranging the contents of the boat in such a manner as would enable her to move through the element with the least possible resistance.

"With a well-trimmed ship and a fair breeze," cried our adventurer, cheerfully, "we may yet hope to reach the land in one day and another night. I have seen the hour when, in this good launch, I would not have hesitated to run the length of the American coast, provided——"

"You have forgotten your provided," said Gertrude, observing that he hesitated, probably from a reluctance to express any exception to the opinion which might increase the fears of his companions.

"Provided it were two months earlier in the year," he added, with less confidence.

"The season is, then, against us; it only requires the greater resolution in ourselves."

Wilder turned his head to regard the fair speaker, whose placid countenance, as the moon silvered her features, expressed anything but the force necessary to endure the hardships he knew she was liable to encounter before they might hope to gain the continent. After musing, he lifted his open hand toward the southwest, and held its palm some little time to the air of the night.

"Anything is better than idleness, for people in our condition," he said. "There are some symptoms of the breeze coming in this quarter; I will be ready to meet it."

He then spread his two lug-sails; and, trimming aft the sheets, placed himself at the helm, like one who expected his services might be shortly needed. The result did not disappoint him. Ere long the light canvas of the boat began to flutter; and then, as he brought the bows in the proper direction, the little vessel commenced moving slowly along its blind and watery path.

The wind, charged with the dampness of night, soon came fresher upon the sails. Wilder urged the latter reason as a motive for the females to seek their rest beneath a little canopy of tarpaulins, which his foresight had provided, and on mattresses he had brought from the ship. Perceiving that their protector wished to be alone, Mrs. Wyllys and her pupil did as desired; and, in a few minutes, if not asleep, no one could have told that any other than our adventurer had possession of the solitary launch.

The middle hour of the night went by, without any material change in the prospects of these lonely travelers. The wind had freshened to a smart breeze; and, by the calculations of Wilder, he had already moved across several leagues of ocean, directly in a line for the eastern end of that long and narrow isle that separates the waters which wash the shores of Connecticut from those of the open sea. The minutes flew swiftly by; for the time was propitious, and the thoughts of the young seaman was busy with the recollections of a short but adventerous life. He leaned forward to catch the gentle respiration of those who slept. Then his form fell back into its seat, and his lip moved as he gave inward utterance to the wayward fancies of his imagination. But at no time, not even in the midst of his greatest abandonment to reverie and thought, did he forget the constant and nearly instinctive duties of his station. A rapid glance at the heavens, an oblique look at the compass, and an occasional but more protracted examination of the pale face of the melancholy moon, were the usual directions taken by his practiced eyes. The latter was still in the zenith; and Wilder saw with uneasiness that she was shining through an atmosphere without a haze. He would have better liked those portentous and watery circles by which she is so often environed, and which are thought to foretell the tempest, than the hard and dry medium through which her beams fell so clear upon the face of the waters. The humidity with which the breeze had commenced was also gone; and, in its place, the sensitive organs of the seaman detected the often grateful though at that moment unwelcome taint of the land. All these were signs that the airs from the continent were about to prevail, and (as he dreaded, from certain wild-looking, long, narrow clouds, that were gathering over the western horizon) to prevail with the force that was usual at that turbulent season.

If any doubts had existed in the mind of Wilder as to the accuracy of his prognostics, they would have been effectually solved about the commencement of the morning watch. At that hour the inconstant breeze began again to die; and, even before its last breathing was felt upon the flapping canvas, it was met by counter currents from the west. Our mariner saw at once that the struggle was now truly to commence, and he made his dispositions accordingly. The square sheets of duck, which had so long been exposed to the mild airs of the south, were reduced to one-third their original size, by double reefs; and several of the

more cumbrous of the remaining articles, such as were of doubtful use to persons in their situation, were cast, without pausing to hesitate, into the sea. Nor was this care without a sufficient object. The air soon came sighing heavily over the deep from the northwest, bringing with it the chilling asperity of the inhospitable region of the Canadas.

"Ah! well do I know you," muttered Wilder as the first puff of this unwelcome wind struck his sails, and forced the little boat to bend to its power in passing; "well do I know you, with your fresh water flavor and your smell of the land! Would to God you had blown your fill upon the lakes, without coming down to drive many a weary seaman back upon his wake, and to eke out a voyage, already too long, by your bitter colds and steady obstinacy!"

"Do you speak?" said Gertrude, half appearing from beneath her canopy, and then shrinking back, shivering, into its cover again, as she felt the influence in the change of air.

"Sleep, lady, sleep," he answered, for he liked not, at such a moment, to be disturbed by even her gentle voice.

"Is there new danger?" she asked, stepping lightly from the mattress, unwilling to disturb the repose of her governess. "You need not fear to tell me the worst; I am a soldier's child!"

He pointed to the signs so well comprehended by himself, but continued silent.

"I feel that the wind is colder than it was, but I see no other change."

"And do you know whither the boat is going?"

"To the land, I think. You assured us of that, and I do not believe you would willingly deceive."

"You do me justice; as a proof of it, I will now tell you that you are mistaken! I know that to your eyes all points of the compass on this void must seem the same, but I cannot so easily deceive myself."

"And we are not sailing for our homes?"

"So far from it, that should this course continue, we must cross the whole Atlantic before we can again see land."

Gertrude made no reply, but retired, in sorrow, to the side of her governess. In the meantime, Wilder, left to himself, began to consult his compass, and the direction of the wind. Perceiving that he might approach nearer to the continent of America by changing the position of the boat, he wore round, and brought its head as nigh up to the southwest as the wind would permit.

But there was little hope in this trifling change. At each minute the power of the breeze was increasing, until it freshened to a degree that compelled him to furl his after-sail. The slumbering ocean was not long in awakening; and, by the time the launch was snug under a close-reefed foresail, the boat was rising on the growing waves, or sinking into the momentary calm of their furrows. The dashing of the waters, and the rushing of the wind, which now began to sweep heavily across the waste, drew the females to the side of their protector. To their hurried and anxious questions he made considerate but brief replies, answering like a man who felt that the time was better suited to action than to words.

In this manner the lingering minutes of the night went by, loaded with a care that each moment rendered heavier, and which each successive freshing of the breeze had a tendency to render more and more anxious. The day came, only to give more distinctness to the cheerless prospect. The waves were looking green and angrily, while, here and there, large crests of foam were beginning to break on their summits —the certain evidence that a conflict betwixt the elements was at hand. Then came the sun over the ragged margin of the eastern horizon, climbing slowly into the blue arch above, which lay clear, chilling, distinct, and without a cloud.

Wilder noted all these changes with a closeness that proved how critical he deemed their case. He seemed rather to consult the signs of the heavens than to regard the tossings and rushings of the water, which dashed against the side of his little vessel in a manner that often appeared to threaten their total destruction. To the latter, however, he was too

much accustomed to anticipate the true moment of alarm, though to the less instructed senses of his companions it already seemed so dangerous. It was to him as is the thunder when compared to the lightning, in the mind of the philosopher; or, rather, he knew that if harm might come from the one on which he floated, its ability to injure must first be called into action by the power of the sister element.

"What do you think of our case now?" asked Mrs. Wyllys, keeping her look fastened on his countenance, as if she would rather trust to its expression, than even to his words, for an answer.

"So long as the wind continues thus, we may yet hope to keep within the route of ships to and from the great northern ports; but, if it freshen to a gale, and the sea begin to break with violence, I doubt the ability of this boat to lie-to."

"Then our resource must be in endeavoring to run before the gale?"

"Then we must scud."

"What would be our direction, in such an event?" demanded Gertrude, to whose mind, in the agitation of the ocean, and the naked view on every hand, all idea of places and distances was left in the most inextricable confusion.

"In such an event," returned the adventurer, regarding her with a look in which commiseration and indefinite concern were so singularly mingled, that her own mild gaze was changed into a timid and furtive glance, "in such an event we should be leaving that land it is so important to reach."

"What 'em 'ere?" cried Cassandra, whose large dark eyes were rolling on every side of her, with a curiosity that no care or sense of danger could extinguish; "'em berry big fish on a water?"

"It is a boat!" cried Wilder, springing upon a thwart to catch a glimpse of a dark object that was driving on the glittering crest of a wave, within a hundred feet of the spot where the launch itself was struggling through the brine. "What, ho!—boat, ahoy!—halloa, there!—boat ahoy!"

The breathing of the wind swept by them, but no human sound answered his shout. They had already fallen between two seas, into a deep vale of water, where the narrow view extended no farther than the rolling barriers on each side.

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed the governess, "can there be others as unhappy as ourselves?"

"It was a boat or my sight is not as true as usual," returned Wilder, still keeping his stand, to watch the moment when he might catch another view. His wish was quickly realized. He had trusted the helm to the hands of Cassandra, who suffered the launch to vary a little from its course. The words were still on his lips, when the same black object came sweeping down the wave to windward, and a pinnace, bottom upward, washed past them in the trough. Then followed a shriek from the negress, who abandoned the tiller, and, sinking on her knees, hid her face in her hands. Wilder instinctively caught the helm, bending his look at the same time in the direction of the object from which the eye of Cassandra had revolted. A human form was seen, erect, and half exposed, advancing in the midst of the broken crest which was still covering the dark declivity to windward with foam. For a moment it stood with the brine dripping from the drenched locks, like some being that had issued from the deep to turn its frightful features on the spectators: and then the lifeless body of a drowned man drove past the launch.

Not only Wilder, but Gertrude and Mrs. Wyllys had seen this startling spectacle so nigh them as to recognize the grim countenance of Knighthead, rendered stern and forbidding by death. Neither spoke or gave any other evidence of their intelligence. Wilder hoped that his companions had at least escaped the shock of recognizing the victim; and the females themselves saw, in the hapless fortune of the mutineer, too much of their own probable though more protracted fate, to be able to give vent to the horror they felt in words. For some time the elements were heard sighing a sort of hoarse requiem over their victim.

"The pinnace has filled!" Wilder at

length ventured to say, when he saw by the pallid features of his companions that it was useless to affect reserve any longer. "Their boat was frail, and loaded to the water's edge."

"Think you all are lost?" observed Mrs. Wyllys, in a voice that scarcely amounted to a whisper. "All! not even a soul escaped?"

"There is no hope for any! Gladly would I part with an arm for the assistance of the poorest of those misguided seamen, who have hurried on their evil fortune by their own disobedience and ignorance."

"And of all the happy and thoughtless human beings who so lately left the harbor of Newport, we alone remain!"

"There is not another; this boat, and its contents, are the sole memorials of the *Royal Caroline!*"

"It was not within the ken of human knowledge to foresee this evil?" continued the governess, fastening her eye on the countenance of Wilder, as if she would ask a question which conscience told her, at the same time, betrayed a portion of that very superstition which had hastened the fate of the rude being they had so lately passed.

"It was not."

"And the danger to which you so often and so inexplicably alluded had no reference to this we have incurred?"

"It had not."

"It has gone with the change in our situation?"

"I hope it has."

"See!" interrupted Gertrude, laying her hand, in her haste, on the arm of Wilder. "Heaven be praised! yonder is something at last to relieve the view."

"It is a ship!" exclaimed her governess; but, an envious wave lifting its green side between them and the object, they sank into a trough, as if the vision had been placed momentarily before their eyes merely to taunt them with its image. Wilder had caught, however, a glimpse of the well-known outlines of a ship against the heavens, as they descended. When the boat rose again, his look was properly directed, and he was enabled to be certain of the reality of the vessel. Wave succeeded wave, and moments followed moments, during which the stranger as often appeared and disappeared as the launch unavoidably rose and fell with the seas. These short and hasty glimpses sufficed, however, to convey all that was necessary to one who had been nurtured on that element where circumstances now exacted of him such constant and unequivocal evidence of his skill.

At the distance of a mile there was a ship rolling and pitching gracefully and without any apparent shock, on those waves through which the launch was struggling with much difficulty. A solitary sail was set to steady the vessel, and that so reduced by reefs as to look like a little snowy cloud waving in the air. At times her tapering masts appeared pointing to the zenith, or rolling as if inclining against the wind; and then, again, with slow and gracefui sweeps, they seemed to fall toward the ruffled surface of the ocean, as if to seek refuge from their endless motion in the bosom of the agitated element itself. There were moments when the long, low, and black hull was seen distinctly resting on the summit of the sea, and glittering in the sunbeams, with the water washing from her sides; and then, as the boat and vessel sank together, all was lost to the eyes, even to the attenuated lines of her tallest and most delicate spars.

Both Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude bowed their faces to their knees, when assured of the truth of their hopes, and poured out their gratitude in silent and secret thanksgivings. The joy of Cassandra was more clamorous and less restrained. The simple negress laughed, shed tears, and exulted, on the prospect that was now offered for the escape of her young mistress and herself from a death that the recent sight had set before her imagination in the most frightful form. But no answering look of congratulation was to be traced in the anxious eye of their companion.

"Now," said Mrs. Wyllys, seizing his hand in both her own, "we may surely hope to be delivered; and then will follow, brave and excellent young man, an oppor-

tunity of proving how highly we rate your services."

Wilder permitted this burst of feeling, but he neither spoke, nor exhibited himself the smallest sympathy in her joy.

"Surely you are not grieved, Mr. Wilder," added the wondering Gertrude, "that the prospect of escape from these awful waves is at length so mercifully held forth to us?"

"I would gladly die to shelter you from harm," returned the young sailor; "but——"

"This is not the time for anything but gratitude," interrupted the governess; "I cannot hearken to any cold exceptions now; what means that 'but?'"

"It may not be as easy as you think to reach the ship—the gale may prevent—in short, many is the vessel that is seen at sea which cannot be spoken."

"Happily such is not our cruel fortune. I understand your wish to dampen hopes that may possibly be thwarted; but I have too long and too often trusted this dangerous element not to know that he who has the advantage of being to windward can speak, or not, as he shall please."

"You are right in saying we are to windward, and, were I in a ship, nothing would be easier than to run within hail of the stranger. That ship is certainly lying to, and yet the gale is not fresh enough to bring so stout a vessel to so short canvas."

"They see us, then, and await our arrival?"

"No, no; thank God, we are not yet seen! This little rag of ours is blended with the spray. They take it for a gull, or a comb of the sea, for the moment it is in view."

"And do you thank Heaven for this?" exclaimed Gertrude, regarding the anxious Wilder with a wonder that her more cautious governess had the power to restrain.

"Did I thank Heaven for not being seen? I may have mistaken the object of my thanks. It is an armed ship!"

"Perhaps a cruiser of the King's! We are the more likely to meet with a welcome reception. Delay not to hoist some signal, lest they increase their sail and leave us."

"You forget that the enemy is often found upon our coast. This might prove a Frenchman!"

"I have no fear of a generous enemy. Even a pirate would give shelter, and welcome, to females in our distress."

A profound silence followed. Wilder stood still upon the thwart, straining his eyes to read each sign that a seaman understands: nor did he appear to find much pleasure in the task.

"We will draw ahead," he said; "and, as the ship is lying on a different tack, we may gain a position that will leave us masters of our movements."

To this his companions knew not well how to make any objection. Mrs. Wyllys was so much struck with the remarkable air of coldness with which he met this prospect of refuge against the forlorn condition in which he had just before confessed they were placed, that she was much more disposed to ponder on the cause than to trouble him with questions she had discernment to see would be useless. Gertrude wondered, while she was disposed to think he might be right, though she knew not why. Cassandra alone was rebellious. She made stout objections against even a moment's delay, assuring the inattentive young seaman, that, should any evil come to her young mistress by his obstinacy, General Grayson would be angered; and she left him to reflect on the results of a displeasure that to her simple mind teemed with more danger than would attend the resentment of a monarch. Provoked by his contumacious disregard of her remonstrances, the negress, forgetting her respect, and blinded by her fears for her whom she not only loved, but had been taught to reverence, seized the boat-hook, and unperceived by Wilder, fastened to it one of the linen cloths that had been brought from the wreck, exposing the fluttering drapery above the diminished sail, ere her device caught the attention of her companions. Then, indeed, she lowered the signal, before the dark look of Wilder. Short as was the triumph of the negress, it was crowned with success.

The restrained silence, which is so apt to succeed a sudden burst of displeasure, was still reigning in the boat, when a cloud of smoke broke out of the side of the ship, the deadened roar of artillery, struggling heavily up against the wind, immediately after.

"It is now too late to hesitate," said Mrs. Wyllys; "we are seen, let the stranger be friend or enemy."

Wilder did not answer, but continued to watch the movements of the stranger. In another moment, the spars were seen receding from the breeze, and, in a couple of minutes more, the head of the ship was changed to the direction in which they lay. Four or five broader sheets of canvas appeared in different parts of the complicated machinery, while the vessel inclined to the breeze. As she mounted on the seas, her bows seemed issuing from the element altogether, and high jets of glittering spray were cast into the air, falling in gems upon the sails and rigging.

"It is now too late, indeed," murmured our adventurer, bearing up the helm of his own little craft, and letting its sheet slip through his hands, until the sail was bagging with the breeze nearly to bursting. The boat which had so long been laboring through the water, with a wish to cling as long as possible to the continent, flew over the seas, leaving a long trail of foam behind; and, before either of the females had regained their entire self-possession, she was floating in the comparative calm that the hull of a large vessel never fails to create.

A light form stood in the rigging of the ship, issuing the necessary orders for her maneuvers; and, in the midst of the confusion and alarm that such a scene was likely to cause in the bosom of woman, Gertrude and Mrs. Wyllys, with their two companions, were transferred in safety to the stranger. The moment they and their effects were secured, the launch was cut adrift, like useless lumber. Twenty mariners were then seen climbing among the ropes; and sail after sail was opened still wider, until, bearing the vast folds of all her canvas spread, the vessel was urged along her trackless course, like a swift cloud drifting through the thin medium of upper air.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Now let it work: Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take then what course thou wilt!"—SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the velocity with which the vessel flew before the wind is properly considered, the reader will not be surprised to learn that, at the end of a week from the time when the foregoing incidents close, we are enabled to open the scene of the present chapter in a very different quarter of the same sea. It is unnecessary to follow the Rover in the windings of his devious and uncertain course, during which his keel furrowed more than a thousand miles of ocean, eluding more than one cruiser of the King, and avoiding sundry less dangerous rencontres, as much from inclination as any other visible cause. It is sufficient for our purpose to lift the curtain which must conceal her movements during this week, when the gallant vessel is in a milder climate, and, the season of the year considered, in a more propitious sea.

Exactly seven days after Gertrude and her governess became the inmates of a ship whose character it is no longer necessary to conceal from the reader, though it remained a secret from the females, the sun rose upon her flapping sails, symmetrical spars, and dark hull, within sight of a few low, small, and rocky islands. The color of the element would have told a seaman, had no mound of blue land been seen in the west, that the bottom of the sea was heaving up nearer to its surface, and that it was necessary to guard against the known and dreaded dangers of a coast. Wind there was none; for the vacillating and uncertain air which from time to time distended the lighter canvas of the vessel was the breathing of a morning that was breaking upon the main, so soft, so mild, and bland as to impart to the sleeping ocean the appearance of a placid lake.

Everything having life in the ship was up and stirring. Fifty stout and healthy-

looking seamen were hanging in different parts of her rigging, some laughing and holding low converse with messmates who, lay indolently on the neighboring spars, and others leisurely performing the light duty that was the ostensible employment of the moment. More than as many others loitered carelessly about the decks below, somewhat similarly engaged; the whole having the appearance of men who were set to perform their trivial tasks more to escape the imputation of idleness than from any actual necessity of their being executed. The quarter-deck, the hallowed spot of every vessel that pretends to discipline, was occupied by a set of seamen who could not lay much greater claim to activity. In short, the vessel partook of the character of the ocean and of the weather, both of which seemed to be reserving their powers to some more suitable occasion for their display.

Three or four young (and, considering the nature of their service, far from unpleasant-looking) men appeared in a sort of undress nautical uniform, in which the fashion of no people in particular was very studiously consulted. Notwithstanding the calm that reigned on all around them, each of them wore a short straight dirk at his girdle; and, as one of them bent over the side of the vessel, the handle of a little pistol was discovered through an opening in the folds of his professional frock. There were, however, no other immediate signs of distrust, by which an observer might infer that this armed precaution was more than the usual custom of the ship. A couple of grim and callous-looking sentinels, attired and accoutered like soldiers of the land, contrary to marine usage, were posted on the line which separated the place sacred to uses of the officers from the forward part of the deck, bespeaking additional caution. Still, these arrangements were regarded by the seamen with incurious eyes—a proof that use had rendered them familiar.

The individual who has been introduced to the reader under the high-sounding title of General, stood, upright and rigid as one of the masts of the ship, studying with a critical eye the equipments of his two mercenaries, and apparently as regardless of what was passing around him as if he literally considered himself a fixture. One form however was to be distinguised from all around it, by the air of authority that breathed even in its repose. It was the Rover. He stood alone, none presuming to approach the spot where he had chosen to plant his person. There was a constant expression of investigation in his wandering eye, as it roved from object to object in the equipment of the vessel; and, at moments, as his eye examined the blue vacuum above him, the cloud that denotes a seaman's responsibility gathered about his brow. This lowering look became so marked, at times, that the fair hair which broke out in ringlets from beneath a black velvet sea-cap, from whose top depended a tassel of gold, could no longer impart to his countenance the gentleness which formed its natural expression in moments of quiet. Disdaining concealment, and as if he wished to announce the nature of the power he wielded, he wore his pistols openly in a leather belt, through which he had thrust, with the same disregard of concealment, a light and curved yataghan, which, by the chasings of its handle, had probably come from the manufactory of an eastern artisan.

On the deck of the poop, overlooking the rest, and retired from the crowd beneath, stood Mrs. Wyllys and her charge, neither of whom announced, in the slightest degree, by eye or air, that anxiety which might be supposed natural to females who found themselves in a condition so critical as that in which they were. On the contrary, while the former pointed out to the latter the hillock of pale blue which rose from the water, like a dark and strongly defined cloud in the distance, hope was strongly blended with the ordinary expression of her features. She also called to Wilder, in a cheerful voice; and the youth, who had long been standing, with a sort of jealous watchfulness, at the foot of the ladder which led from the quarter-deck, was at her side in an instant.

"I am telling Gertrude," said the governess, "that yonder is her home; that

when the breeze shall be felt, we may speedily hope to reach it; but the willfully timid girl insists that she cannot believe her senses, after the frightful risks we have run, until, at least, she shall see the dwelling of her childhood and the face of her father. You have often been on this coast before, Mr. Wilder?"

"Often, madam."

"Then you can tell us the name of the distant land we see?"

"Land?" repeated our adventurer, affecting a look of surprise; "is there land in view?"

"Is there land in view! Have not hours gone by since it was proclaimed from the masts?"

"It may be so. We seamen are dull after a night of watching, and we often hear little of what passes."

A suspicious glance was shot from the eye of the governess, as if she approached she knew not what.

"Has the sight of the cheerful, blessed soil of America so soon lost its charm in your eye, that you approach it with so heedless an air? The infatuation of men of your profession, in favor of so treacherous an element, is an enigma I never could explain."

"Do seamen, then, really love their calling with so devoted an affection?" innocently demanded Gertrude.

"It is a folly of which we are at least accused," rejoined Wilder, turning his eye on the speaker, and smiling in a manner that had lost every shade of reserve.

"And justly!"

"I fear, justly."

"Too justly!" said Mrs. Wyllys, with emphasis; "better than quiet and peaceful homes!"

Gertrude pursued the idea no further; but her eye fell to the deck, as if she reflected on a perversity of taste which could render man so insensible to domestic pleasures, and incline him to court the dangers of which she had been a witness.

"I, at least, am free from the latter charge," exclaimed Wilder. "A ship has always been my home."

"Much of my life, too, has been wasted in one," continued the governess, who was pursuing, in her own mind, some images of a time long past. "Happy and miserable, alike, have been the hours that I have passed upon the sea! Nor is this the first king's ship in which it has been my fortune to be thrown. And yet the customs seem changed since the days I mean; or else my memory is beginning to lose some of the impressions of an age when memory is apt to be most tenacious. Is it usual, for instance, Mr. Wilder, to admit an utter stranger, like yourself, to exercise authority in a vessel of war?"

"Certainly not."

"And yet you have been acting, as far as my recollections are true, as second here, since the moment we entered this vessel, wrecked and helpless fugitives from the waves."

Our adventurer again averted his eye, and evidently searched for words ere he replied—

"A commission is always respected. Mine procured for me the consideration you have witnessed."

"You are then an officer of the crown?"

"Would any other authority be respected in a vessel of the crown? Death had left a vacancy in the second station of this—cruiser. Fortunately for the wants of the service, perhaps for myself, I was at hand to fill it."

"But, tell me farther," continued the governess, who appeared disposed to profit by the occasion to solve more doubts than one, "is it usual for the officers of a vessel of war to appear armed among their crew, in the manner I see here?"

"It is the pleasure of our commander."

"That commander is evidently a skillful seaman; but his caprices and tastes are as extraordinary as his mien. I have surely seen him before, and, it would seem, but lately."

Mrs. Wyllys was silent for several minutes. During the whole time, her eye was never averted from the form of the calm and motionless being who still maintained his attitude of repose, aloof from all that throng whom he had the address to render so entirely dependent on his authority.

The governess studied the smallest peculiarity of his person as if she would never tire of her gaze. Drawing a heavy and relieving breath, she remembered, however, that she was not alone, and that others were silently awaiting the process of her thoughts. Without manifesting embarrassment at an absence of mind that was far too common to surprise her pupil, she resumed the discourse where she had herself dropped it, turning again toward Wilder.

"Is Captain Heidegger an old acquaintance?" she demanded.

"We have met before."

"It should be a name of German origin by the sound. I am certain it is new to me. And yet there was a time when few officers of his rank were unknown to me, at least by name. Is his family of long standing in England?"

"That is a question he may better answer himself," said Wilder, glad to perceive that the subject of their discourse was approaching. "For the moment, madam, my duty calls me elsewhere."

Wilder withdrew with reluctance; and, had suspicion been active in the breasts of either of his companions, they would not have failed to note the glance of distrust with which he watched the manner of his commander in making his salutations. There was nothing, however, in the air of the Rover that should have given ground to so much jealous vigilance. On the contrary, he was cold and abstracted, appearing to mingle in their discourse, more from a sense of the obligations of hospitality, than from any satisfaction that he might derive from the intercourse. Still, his deportment was kind, and his voice bland as the airs that were wafted from the healthful islands in view.

"There is a sight," he said, pointing toward the low blue ridges of the land, "that forms the landsman's delight, and the seaman's terror."

"Are seamen so averse to the view of regions where so many millions of their fellow-creatures find pleasure in dwelling?" demanded Gertrude (to whom he more particularly addressed his words), with a frankness that would, in itself, have sufficiently proved no glimmerings of his real character had ever dawned on her spotless and unsuspicious mind.

"Miss Grayson included," he returned, with a slight bow, and a smile, in which, perhaps, irony was concealed by playfulness. "After the risk you have run, even I, confirmed and obstinate sea-monster as I am, have no reason to complain of your distaste for our element. And yet, you see it is not entirely without its charms. No lake that lies within the limit of yonder continent, can be more calm and sweet than this bit of ocean. Were we a few degrees more southward, I would show you landscapes of rock and mountain — of bays, and of hillsides sprinkled with verdure—of tumbling whales and lazy fishermen, and distant cottages, and lagging sails—that would make a figure even in pages that the bright eye of a lady might love to read."

"And yet for most of your picture would you be indebted to the land. In return for this sketch, I would take you north, and show you black and threatening clouds—a green and angry sea—shipwrecks and shoals—cottages, hillsides, and mountains, in the imagination only of the drowning man—and sails bleached by waters that contain the voracious shark, or the disgusting polypus."

Gertrude had answered in his own vein; but it was too evident from a tremor that stole into her voice, that memory was also busy with its frightful images. The Rover was not slow to detect the change. Desirous of banishing every recollection that might give her pain, he artfully, but delicately, gave a new direction to the discourse.

"There are people who think the sea has no amusements," he said. "To a pining, homesick, seasick, miserable lubber, this may be true enough; but the man who has sufficient spirit to keep down the qualms of the animal may tell a different tale. We have our balls regularly, for instance; and there are artists on board this ship, who, though they cannot, perhaps, make as accurate a right angle with their legs as the first dancer of a ballet,

can go through their figures in a gale of wind; which is more than can be said of the highest jumper of them all on shore."

"A ball without females, would, at least, be thought an unsocial amusement, with us uninstructed people of *terra firma*."

"Hum! It might be all the better for a lady or two. Then we have our theatre. Farce, comedy, and the buskin, take their turns to help along the time. Yon fellow, that you see lying on the fore-top-sail-yard, like an indolent serpent basking on the branch of a tree, will 'roar for you as gently as any sucking dove!' And here is a votary of Momus, who would raise a smile on the lips of a seasick friar. I believe I can say no more in his commendation."

"All this is well in the description," returned Mrs. Wyllys; "but something is due to the merit of the—poet or painter shall I term you?"

"Neither, but a grave and veritable chronologer. However, since you doubt, and since you are so new to the ocean—"

"Pardon me!" the lady gravely interrupted. "On the contrary, I have seen much of it."

The Rover, who had rather suffered his unsettled glances to wander over the youthful countenance of Gertrude than toward her companion, now bent his eyes on the last speaker, where he kept them fastened so long as to create some little embarrassment in the subject of his gaze.

"You seem surprised that the time of a female should have been thus employed," she observed, with a view to arouse his attention to the impropriety of his observation.

"We were speaking of the sea, if I remember," he continued, like a man that was suddenly awakened from a reverie. "Aye, I know it was of the sea; for I had grown boastful of my panegyrics; I had told you that this ship was faster than——"

"Nothing!" exclaimed Gertrude, laughing at his blunder. "You were playing master of ceremonies at a nautical ball."

"Will you figure in a minuet? Will you honor my boards with the graces of your person?"

"I, sir? and with whom? With the gentleman who knows so well the manner of keeping his feet in a gale?"

"You were about to relieve any doubts we might have concerning the amusements of seamen," said the governess, reproving the too playful spirit of her pupil, by a glance of her grave eye.

"Aye, it was the humor of the moment, nor will I balk it."

He turned to Wilder, who had posted himself within ear-shot of what was passing, and continued—

"These ladies doubt our gayety, Mr. Wilder. Let the boatswain give the magical wind of his call, and pass the word 'To mischief,' among his people."

Our adventurer bowed his acquiescence and issued the order. In a few moments, the individual who made acquaintance with the reader in the bar-room of the "Foul Anchor," appeared in the center of the vessel, near the main hatchway, decorated as before with his silver chain and whistle, and accompanied by two mates, who were humble scholars of the same gruff school. A long, shrill whistle followed from the instrument of Nightingale, who, when the sound had died away on the ear, roared, in his least sonorous tones—

"All hands to mishief, ahoy!"

We have before had occasion to liken these sounds to the muttering of a bull, nor shall we see fit to disturb the comparison, since no other similitude so apt presents itself. The example of the boatswain was followed by each of his mates in turn, when the summons was deemed sufficient. However unintelligible and grum the call might sound in the ears of Gertrude, it produced no unpleasant effects on the organs of a majority of those who heard it. When the first note of the call mounted on the air, each idle and extended young seaman, as he lay stretched upon a spar, or hung dangling from a ratline, lifted his head to catch the words that were to follow, as an obedient spaniel pricks his ears to catch his master's voice.

But no sooner was the emphatic word pronounced, which preceded the long-drawn and customary exclamation with which Nightingale closed his summons, than the low murmur of voices, which had so long been maintained among the men, broke out in a common shout.

Every symptom of lethargy disappeared in an instant. The young and nimble topmen bounded into the rigging of their respective masts, ascending the shaking ladders of ropes like so many squirrels hastening to their holes at the signal of alarm. The graver and heavier seamen of the forecastle, the quarter-gunners and quarter-masters, the less instructed and half-startled waisters, and the raw and actually alarmed after-guard, all hurried, by a sort of instinct, to their several points; the more practiced to plot mischief against their shipmates, and the less intelligent, conscious of their ignorance, to concert the means of defense.

In an instant, the tops and yards were ringing with laughter and jokes, as each exulting mariner aloft proclaimed his device to his fellows, or urged his own inventions at the expense of some less ingenious mode of annoyance. On the other hand, the distrustful and often-repeated glances that were thrown upward, from the men who had clustered on the quarter-deck and around the foot of the mainmast, sufficiently proclaimed the diffidence with which the novices on deck were about to enter into the expected contest of practical wit. The steady and more earnest seamen forward, however, maintained their places with a stern resolution which proved their reliance on their physical force, and on their long familiarity with the humors, as well as with the dangers, of the ocean.

Another little cluster of men assembled, in the midst of the general clamor and confusion, with a haste and steadiness that announced both a consciousness of the entire necessity of unity on the present occasion, and the habit of acting in concert. These were the drilled and military dependents of the General, between whom and the less artificial seamen there existed not only an antipathy that might almost be called instinctive, but which, for obvious reasons, had been so strongly encouraged in the vessel of which we write, as often to manifest itself in turbulent and nearly mutinous broils. About twenty in number, they collected quickly; and, although obliged to dispense with their fire-arms in such an amusement, there was a sternness in the visage of each of the whiskered worthies, that showed how readily he could appeal to the bayonet that was suspended from his shoulders, should there be need. Their commander withdrew, with the rest of the officers, to the poop, in order that their presence should prove no encumbrance to the freedom of the sports.

A couple of minutes might have been lost in producing the different changes we have just related. But, so soon as the top-men were sure that no unfortunate laggard of their party was within reach of the resentment of the different groups beneath, they complied literally with the summons of the boatswain, by commencing their mischief.

Sundry buckets, most of which had been provided for the extinction of fire, were quickly pendent from as many whips* on the outer extremity of the different yards, and descending toward the sea. In spite of the awkward opposition of the men below, these leathern vessels were speedily filled and run up to the yards again. Many a gaping waister and rigid marine now made a more familiar acquaintance with the elements on which he had enlisted than suited either his convenience or his humor. So long as the jokes were confined to these semi-initiated tyros, the top-men enjoyed the fun with impunity; but, the instant the dignity of a quarter-gunner's person was invaded, the whole gang of petty officers and forecastle men rose in a body to resent the insult. They made their retort with a readiness and dexterity that manifested how much at home the elder mariners were in all that belonged to their art. A small fire engine was transferred to the

* A rope rove through a single block is termed a "whip" in nautical language.

head, and brought to bear on the nearest top, like a well-planted battery clearing the way for the expected charge. The laughing and chattering top-men were soon dispersed; some ascending beyond the power of the engine, and others retreating into the neighboring top, along ropes and across giddy heights that would have seemed impracticable to any animal less agile than a squirrel or a monkey.

The marines were now summoned forward by the successful and malicious mariners, to improve their advantage. Thoroughly drenched already, and eager to resent their wrongs, a half-dozen of the soldiers, led on by a corporal, the coating of whose powdered poll had been converted into a sort of paste by too great an intimacy with a bucket of water, essayed to mount the rigging; an exploit that to them was much more arduous than it would have been to enter a breach. The waggish quarter-gunners and quartermasters, satisfied with their own success, stimulated them to the enterprise: and Nightingale and his mates, while they rolled their tongues into their cheeks, gave forth with their whistles the cheering sound of "Heave away!" The sight of these adventurers, slowly and cautiously mounting the rigging, acted on the scattered top-men very much in the manner that the appearance of so many flies, in the vicinity of a web, is known to act on their concealed and rapacious enemy, the spider. The sailors aloft understood, by expressive glances from those below, that a soldier was considered legal game. No sooner, therefore, had the latter fairly entered into the toils, than twenty top-men rushed out upon them, in order to make sure of their prizes. In an incredibly short space of time, the assailants were captured to a man.

Two or three of the aspiring adventurers were lashed where they had been found, unable to make any resistance in a spot where instinct itself irresistibly urged them to devote both hands to the necessary duty of holding fast; while the rest were transferred, by means of whips, to different spars, very much in the manner that a light sail or a yard would have been swayed into its place.

In the midst of the clamorous rejoicings that attended this success, one individual made himself conspicuous for the gravity and business-like air with which he performed his particular part of the comedy. Seated on the outer end of the lower yard, with as much steadiness as if he had been placed on an ottoman, he was gravely occupied in examining into the condition of a captive, who had been run up at his feet, with an order from the waggish captain of the top, to "turn-him-in for a jewel block;" an appellation that is given to the blocks that are pendent from the ends of certain yards, and which appears to have been taken from the precious stones that are so often seen dangling from the ears of the fair.

"Aye, aye," muttered this deliberate and grave-looking tar, who was no other than Richard Fid, "the stropping you've sent up with the fellow is none of the best; and, he squeaks so now, what will he do when you come to reeve a rope through him! By the Lord, masters, you should have furnished the lad with a better outfit, if you meant to send him into good company aloft. Here are more holes in his jacket than there are cabin windows to a Chinese junk. Hilloa!—on deck there!—you Guinea, pick me up a tailor, and send him aloft to keep the wind out of this waister's tarpaulin."

The athletic African, who, on account of his great strength, had been posted on the forecastle, cast an eye upward, and, with both arms thrust into his bosom, he rolled along the deck, with just as serious a mien as if he had been sent on duty of the gravest kind. The uproar overhead had drawn a most helpless looking mortal from a retired corner of the berth-deck to the ladder of the forward hatch, where, with a body half above the combings, a skein of strong, coarse thread around his neck, a piece of beeswax in one hand, and a needle in the other, he stood staring about him with just that sort of bewildered air that a Chinese mandarin would manifest were he to be suddenly initiated into the mysteries of the ballet. On this

object the eye of Scipio fell. Stretching out an arm, he cast him upon his shoulder, and, before the startled subject of his attack knew into whose hands he had fallen, a hook was passed beneath the waistband of his trousers, and he was half-way between the water and the spar, on his way to Fid.

"Have a care lest you let that man fall into the sea!" cried Wilder, sternly, from his stand on the distant poop.

"H'em a tailor, Master Harry," returned the deliberate black; "if he clothes no 'trong, he nobody to blame but heself."

During this brief parlance, the goodman Homespun had safely arrived at the termination of his flight. Here he was suitably received by Fid, who raised him to his side; and, having placed him comfortably between the yard and the boom, he proceeded to secure him by a lashing that would give the tailor the proper disposition of his hands.

"Bouse a bit on this waister!" called out Richard, when he had properly secured the goodman; "so; belay all that."

He then put one foot on the neck of his prisoner, and, seizing his lower member as it swung uppermost, he coolly placed it in the lap of the awestruck tailor.

"There, friend," he said, "handle your needle and palm now, as if you were at job-work. Your knowing handicraft always begins with the foundation, whereby he makes sure that his upper gear will stand."

"The Lord protect me, and all other sinful mortals, from an untimely end!" exclaimed Homespun, gazing at the vacant view from his giddy elevation, with a sensation a little resembling that with which the aeronaut, in his first experiment, regards the prospect beneath.

"Settle away this waister," again called Fid: "he interrupts rational conversation by his noise; and, as his gear is condemned by this here tailor, why, you may turn him over to the purser for a new outfit."

The real motive, however, of getting rid of his pendent companion, was a twinkling of humanity that still glimmered through the rough humor of the tar, who well knew that his prisoner must hang where he did at a good deal of expense of bodily ease. As soon as his request was complied with, he turned to the goodman to renew the discourse with just as much composure as if they were both seated on the deck, or as if a dozen practical jokes of the same character were not in the process of enactment in as many different parts of the vessel.

"Why do you open your eyes, brother, in this port-hole fashion?" commenced the top-man. "This is all water that you see about you, except that hommock of blue in the eastern board, which is a morsel of upland in the Bahamas, d'ye see."

"A sinful and presuming world is this we live in!" returned the goodman; "nor can any one tell at what moment his life is to be taken from him. Five bloody and cruel wars have I lived to see in safety, and yet am I reserved to meet this disgraceful and profane end at last."

"Well, since you have had your luck in the wars, you've the less reason to grumble at the bit of a surge you may have felt in your garments, as they ran you up to this here yard-arm. I say, brother, I have known stouter fellows take the same ride, who never knew when or how they got down again."

Homespun, who did not more than half comprehend the allusion of Fid, now regarded him in a way that announced some little desire for an explanation, mingled with great admiration of the unconcern with which his companion maintained his position without the smallest aid from anything but his self-balancing powers.

"I say, brother," resumed Fid, "that many a stout seaman has been whipped up to the end of a yard, who has started by the signal of a gun, and who has stayed there just as long as the president of a court-martial was pleased to believe might be necessary to improve his honesty!"

"It would be a fearful and frightful trifling with Providence, in the least offending and conscientious mariner, to take such awful punishments in vain, by acting them in his sports; but doubly so do I pronounce it in the crew of a ship on which no man can say at what hour retribution

and compunction are to alight. It seems to me unwise to tempt Providence by these provocating exhibitions."

Fid cast a glance of more than usual significance at the goodman, and even postponed his reply until he had freshened his ideas by an ample addition to the morsel of weed which he had kept all along thrust into one of his cheeks. Then, casting his eyes about him, in order to see that none of his noisy and riotous companions of the top were within earshot, he fastened a still more meaning look on the countenance of the tailor, and responded as follows:

"Hark, ye brother, whatever may be the other good points of Richard Fid, his friends cannot say he is much of a scholar. This being the case, he has not seen fit to ask a look at the sailing orders on coming aboard this wholesome vessel. I suppose, howsomever, that they can be forthcoming at need, and that no honest man need be ashamed to be found cruising under the same."

"Ah! Heaven protect such unoffending innocents as serve her against their will, when the allotted time of the cruiser shall be filled!" returned Homespun. "I take it, however, that you, as a seafaring and understanding man, have not entered into this enterprise without receiving the bounty and knowing the wholesome nature of the service?"

"The devil a bit have I entered at all, either in the *Enterprise* or in the *Dolphin*, as they call the craft. There is Master Harry, the lad on the poop there—he who hails a yard like a bull-whale roaring—I follow his signals, d'ye see; and it is seldom I bother him with questions as to what tack he means to lay his boat on next."

"What! would you sell your soul in this manner to Beelzebub, and, that too, without a price?"

"I say, friend, it may be as well to overhaul your ideas before you let them slip, in this no-man's fashion, from your tongue. I would wish to treat a gentleman who has come aloft to pay me a visit with such civility as may do credit to my top, though the crew be at mischief, d'ye see? But an officer like him I follow has a name of his own, without stopping to borrow one of the person you've just seen fit to name. I scorn such a pitiful thing as a threat; but a man of your years needn't be told that it is just as easy to go down from this here spar as it was to come up to it."

The tailor cast a glance beneath him into the brine and hastened to do away the unfavorable impression which his last unfortunate interrogation had so evidently left on the mind of his brawny associate.

"Heaven forbid that I should call any one but their given and family names, as the law commands," he said. "I meant merely to inquire, if you would follow the gentleman you serve to so unseemly and pernicious a place as a gibbet?"

Fid ruminated some little time, before he could muster his ideas to reply to so comprehensive a question. During this unusual process he agitated the weed, with which his mouth was nearly gorged, with great industry; and then, terminating both processes by casting a jet of the juice nearly to the spritsail-yard, he said in a very decided tone:

"If I wouldn't may I be d——d! After sailing in company for four-and-twenty years, I should be no better than a sneak, to part company because such a trifle as a gallows hove in sight."

"The pay of such a service should be both generous and punctual, and the cheer of the most encouraging character," the goodman observed, in a way which manifested that he would not be displeased were he to receive a circumstantial reply. Fid was in no disposition to balk his curiosity, but rather deemed himself bound, since he had entered on the subject, to leave no part of it unexplained.

"As for the pay, d'ye see," he said, "it is seaman's wages. I should despise myself to take less than falls to the share of the best foremast hand in a ship, since it would be all the same as owning that I got my deserts. But Master Harry has a way of his own in rating men's services; and if his ideas get jammed in an affair of this sort it is no markling-spike that I handle which can loosen them. I once

just named the propriety of getting me a quarter-master's berth; but devil a bit would he be doing the thing, seeing, as he says himself, that I have a fashion of getting a little hazy at times, which would only be putting me in danger of disgrace; since everybody knows that the higher a monkey climbs in the rigging of a ship, the easier everybody on deck can see that he has a spar abaft which isn't human. Then, as to cheer, it is seaman's fare; sometimes a cut to spare for a friend, and sometimes a hungry stomach."

"But then there are often divisions of the—a—a—the prize-money in this successful cruiser?" observed the goodman, averting his face as he spoke, perhaps from a consciousness that it might betray an unseemly interest in the answer. "I dare say you receive amends for all your sufferings, when the purser gives forth the spoils?"

"Hark ye, brother," said Fid, again assuming a look of significance; "can you tell me where the admiralty court sits which condemns her prizes?"

The tailor returned the glance with interest; but an extraordinary uproar, in another part of the vessel, cut short the dialogue, just as there was a rational probability it might lead to some consolatory explanations between the parties.

As the action of the tale is shortly to be set in motion again, we shall refer the cause of the commotion to the opening of the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

"Come, and get thee a sword, though made of lath:
They have been up these two days."
—KING HENRY VI.

WHILE the little by-play that we have just related was enacting on the fore-yard-arm of the *Rover*, scenes that partook equally of the nature of tragedy and farce were in the process of exhibition elsewhere. The contest between the possessors of the deck and the active tenants of the top, was far from having reached its termination.

Blows had, in more that one instance, succeeded to angry words; and, as the former was a part of the sports in which the marines and waisters were on an equality with their more ingenious tormentors, the war was beginning to be waged with some appearances of a doubtful success. Nightingale, however, was always ready to recall the combatants to their sense of propriety, with his well-known wind of the call, and his murmuring voice. A long, shrill whistle, with the words "Good humor, ahoy!" had hitherto served to keep down the rising tempers of the different parties, when the joke bore too hard on the high-spirited soldier, or the revengeful, though perhaps less mettlesome, member of the after-guard. But an oversight on the part of him who in common kept so vigilant an eye on the movements of all beneath his orders, had nearly led to results of a more serious nature.

No sooner had the crew commenced the rough sports we have just related, than the vein which had induced the Rover momentarily to loosen the reins of discipline seemed suddenly to subside. The gay and cheerful air that he had maintained in his dialogue with his female guests (or prisoners, whichever he might be disposed to consider them), had disappeared in a thoughtful and clouded brow. His eye no longer lighted with those glimmerings of wayward and sarcastic humor in which he loved occasionally to indulge, but its impression became settled and austere. His mind had relapsed into one of those brooding reveries that so often obscured his mien, as a shadow darkens the golden tints of the ripe and waving corn.

While most of those who were not actors in the humorous achievements of the crew steadily regarded the same, some with wonder, others with distrust, and all with more or less of the humor of the hour, the Rover, to all appearance, was unconscious of all that was going on. It is true, that at times he raised his eyes to the active beings who clung like squirrels to the ropes, or suffered them to fall on the duller movements of the men below; but it was always with a vacancy which proved that

the image they carried to the brain was dim and illusory. The looks that he cast from time to time on Mrs. Wyllys and her fair and interested pupil betrayed the workings of the temper of the inward man. It was only in these brief but comprehensive glances that the feelings by which he was governed might have been, in any manner, traced to their origin. Still the nicest observer would have been puzzled, in endeavoring to pronounce on the entire character of the emotions uppermost in his mind. At instants, it might have been fancied that some unholy and licentious passion was getting the ascendency; and then, as his eye ran rapidly over the chaste and matronly, though still attractive, countenance of the governess, the look of doubt, as well as of respect, with which he gazed, was too obvious to be misinterpreted.

While the Rover was thus occupied, the sports proceeded, sometimes humorous and forcing smiles from the lips of the half-terrified Gertrude, but always tending to that violence and outbreaking of anger, which might, at any moment, set at naught the discipline of a vessel in which there were no other means of enforcing authority than such as its officers could, on the instant, command. Water had been so lavishly expended, that the decks were running with the fluid, more than one flight of spray having invaded the privileged precincts of the poop. Every ordinary device of similar scenes had been resorted to by the men aloft to annoy their less advantageously posted shipmates beneath; and such means of retaliation had been adopted as use or facility rendered obvious. Here a hog and a waister were seen swinging against each other, pendent beneath a top; there a marine lashed in the rigging was obliged to suffer the manipulation of a pet monkey, which, drilled to the duty and armed with a comb, was posted on his shoulders, with an air as grave and an eye as observant as if he had been regularly educated in the art of the perruquier; and everywhere, some coarse and practical joke proclaimed the licentious liberty which had been momentarily accorded to a set of beings, who were, in common, kept in that restraint which comfort, no less than safety, requires for the well-ordering of an armed ship.

In the midst of the noise and turbulence, a voice was heard, apparently issuing from the ocean, hailing the vessel by name, with the aid of a speaking-trumpet, that had been applied to the outer circumference of a hawse-hole.

"Who speaks the *Dolphin*?" demanded Wilder, when he perceived that the summons had fallen on the ears of his commander, without recalling him to the recollection of what was in action.

"Father Neptune is under your forefoot."

"What wills the god?"

"He has heard that certain strangers have come into his dominions, and he wishes leave to come aboard the saucy *Dolphin* to inquire into their errands, and to overhaul the log-book for their characters."

"He is welcome. Show the old man aboard through the head; he is too experienced a sailor to wish to come in by the cabin windows."

Here the parlance ceased; for Wilder turned upon his heel, disgusted with his part of the mummery.

An athletic seaman soon appeared, seemingly issuing from the element whose deity he personated. Mops, dripping with brine, supplied the place of hoary locks; gulf-weed, of which acres were floating within a league of the ship, composed a sort of negligent mantle; and in his hand he bore a trident, made of three marling-spikes properly arranged, and borne on the staff of a half-pike.

Thus accoutered, the god of the ocean, who was no less a personage than the captain of the forecastle, advanced with a suitable air of dignity along the deck, attended by a train of bearded water-nymphs and naiads, in costumes as grotesque as his own. Arrived on the quarter-deck, in front of the position occupied by the officers, the principal personage saluted the group, with a wave of his scepter, and resumed the discourse as follows; Wilder, from the continued abstraction of his

commander, finding himself under the necessity of maintaining one portion of the dialogue:

"A wholesome and prettily-rigged boat have you come out in this time, my son; and one well filled with a noble set of my children. How long is it since you left the land?"

"Some eight days."

"Hardly time enough to give the green ones the use of their sea legs. I shall be able to find them, by the manner in which they hold on in a calm." Here the General, who was standing with a scornful and averted eye, let go his hold of a mizzen-shroud, which he had grasped for no other visible reason than to render his person utterly immovable; Neptune smiled, and continued: "I sha'n't ask concerning the port you are last from, seeing that the Newport soundings are still hanging about the flukes of your anchors. I hope you haven't brought out many fresh hands with you, for I smell the tock-fish aboard a Balticman, who is coming down with the trades, and who can't be more than a hundred leagues from this; I shall therefore have but little time to overhaul your people, in order to give them their papers."

"You see them all before you. So skillful a mariner as Neptune needs no advice when or how to tell a seaman."

"I shall then begin with this gentleman," continued the waggish head of the forecastle, turning toward the still motionless chief of the marines. "There is a strong look of the land about him, and I should like to know how many hours it is since he first floated over blue water?"

"I believe he has made many voyages; and I dare say has long since paid the proper tribute to your majesty."

"Well, well; the thing is like enough, tho' I will say I have known scholars make better use of their time, if he has been as long on the water as you pretend. How is it with these ladies?"

"Both have been at sea before, and have a right to pass without a question," resumed Wilder, a little hastily.

"The youngest is comely enough to have been born in my dominions," said the gallant sovereign of the sea; "but no one can refuse to answer a hail that comes straight from the mouth of old Neptune; so if it makes no great difference in your honor's reckoning, I will just beg the young woman to do her own talking." Then, without paying the least attention to the angry glance of Wilder, the sturdy representative of the god addressed himself directly to Gertrude. "If, as report goes, my pretty damsel, you have seen blue water before this passage, you may be able to recollect the name of the vessel, and some other small particulars of the run?"

The face of Gertrude changed its color from red to pale, as rapidly and as glowingly as the evening sky flushes and returns to its pearl-like loveliness; but she kept down her feelings sufficiently to answer with an air of entire self-possession—

"Were I to enter into all these little particulars, it would detain you from more worthy subjects. Perhaps this certificate will convince you that I am no novice of the sea."

As she spoke, a guinea fell from her white hand into the broad and extended palm of her interrogator.

"I can only account for my not remembering your ladyship by the great extent and heavy nature of my business," returned the audacious freebooter, bowing with an air of rude politeness as he pocketed the offering. "Had I looked into my books before I came aboard this here ship, I should have seen through the mistake at once; for now I remember that I ordered one of my limners to take your pretty face, in order that I might show it to my wife at home. The fellow did it well enough in the shell of an East India oyster; I will have a copy set in coral, and sent to your husband, whenever you may see fit to choose one."

Then, repeating his bow, with a scrape of the foot, he turned to the governess, in order to continue his examination.

"And you, madam," he said, "is this the first time you have ever come into my dominions, or not?"

"Neither the first, nor the twentieth; I have often seen your majesty before."

"An old acquaintance! In what latitude might it be that we first fell in with each other?"

"I believe I first enjoyed that honor, quite thirty years since, under the equator."

"Aye, aye, I'm often there, looking out for Indiamen and your home-bound Brazil traders. I boarded a particularly great number that very season, but can't say I remember your countenance."

"I fear that thirty years have made some changes in it," returned the governess, with a smile, which, though mournful, was too far dignified in its melancholy to induce the suspicion that she regretted a loss so vain as that of her personal charms. "I was in a vessel of the King's, and one that was a little remarkable for its size, since it was of three decks."

The god received the guinea, which was now secretly offered; but it would seem that success had quickened his covetousness, for, instead of returning thanks, he rather appeared to manifest a disposition to increase the amount of the bribe.

"All this may be just as your ladyship says," he rejoined, "but the interest of my kingdom, and a large family at home, make it necessary that I should look sharp to my rights. Was there a flag on the vessel?"

"There was."

"Then it is likely they hoisted it, as usual, at the end of the jib boom?"

"It was hoisted, as is usual with a vice-admiral, at the fore."

"Well answered, for petticoats!" muttered the deity, a little baffled in his artifice. "It is d——d queer, saving your ladyship's presence, that I should have forgotten such a ship. Was there anything of the extraordinary sort, that one would be likely to remember?"

The features of the governess had already lost their forced pleasantry in a shade of reflection, and her eyes were fastened on vacancy, as she answered like one who thought aloud.

"I can, at this moment, see the arch and roguish manner with which the wayward boy, who then had but eight years, overreached the cunning of the mimic *Neptune*, and retaliated for his devices by turning the laugh of all on board on his own head!"

"Was he but eight?" demanded a deep voice at her elbow.

"Eight in years, but mature in artifice," returned Mrs. Wyllys, seeming to awake from a trance, as she turned her eyes full upon the face of the Rover.

"Well, well," interrupted the captain of the forecastle, who cared not to continue an inquiry in which his dreaded commander saw fit to take a part, "I dare say it is all right. I will look into my journal; if I find it so, well—if not, why, it's only giving the ship a head-wind, until I've overhauled the Dane, and then it will be all in good time to receive the balance of the fee."

So saying the god hurried past the officers, and turned his attention to the marine guard, who had grouped themselves in a body, secretly aware of the necessity each man might be under of receiving support from his fellows in so searching a scrutiny. Perfectly familiar with the career each individual among them had run in his present lawless profession, and secretly apprehensive that his authority might be suddenly forced from him, the chief of the forecastle selected a raw landsman from among them, ordering his attendants to drag the victim forward, where he believed they might act the cruel revels he contemplated with less danger of interruption. Already irritated by the laughs which had been created at their expense, and resolute to defend their comrade, the marines resisted.

A long, clamorous, and angry dispute succeeded, during which each party maintained its right to pursue the course it had adopted. From words the disputants were not long in passing to the usual signs of hostilities. While the peace of the ship thus hung, as it were, suspended by a hair, the General saw fit to express the disgust of such an outrage upon discipline, which had, throughout the whole scene, possessed his mind.

"I protest against this riotous and unmilitary procedure," he said, addressing himself to his still abstracted and thought-

ful superior. "I have taught my men, I trust, the proper spirit of soldiers; and there is no greater disgrace can happen to one of them than to lay hands on him, except it be in the regular and wholesome way of a cat. I give open warning to all, that if a finger is put upon one of my bullies, unless as I have said in the way of discipline, it will be answered with a blow."

As the General had not essayed to smother his voice, it was heard by his followers, and produced the effect which might have been expected. A vigorous thrust from the fist of the sergeant drew mortal blood from the visage of the god of the sea, at once establishing his terrestrial origin. Thus compelled to vindicate his manhood, in more senses than one, the stout seaman returned the salutation, with such additional embellishments as the exigencies of the moment seemed to require. Such an interchange of civilities, between two so prominent personages, was the signal of general hostilities among their respective followers. It was the uproar which attended this onset that caught the attention of Fid, who, the instant he saw the nature of the sports below, abandoned his companion in the yard, and slid down to the deck by the aid of a backstay, with as much facility as a monkey could have in the same maneuver. His example was followed by all the topmen; and there was every appearance that the audacious marines would be borne down by the sheer force of numbers. But, stout in their resolution, and bitter in their hostility, these drilled warriors, instead of seeking refuge in flight, fell back upon each other for support. Bayonets were seen gleaming in the sun; while some of the seamen, in the exterior of the crowd, were already laying their hands on the half-pikes that formed a warlike ornament to the foot of the mast.

"Hold! stand back, every man of you!" cried Wilder, dashing into the center of the throng and forcing them aside, with a haste that was possibly quickened by the recollection of the increased danger that would surround the unprotected females, should the bands of subordination be once broken among so lawless and desperate a crew. "On your lives, fall back, and obey. And you, sir, who claim to be a good soldier, I call on you to bid your men refrain."

The General, however disgusted he might have been by the previous scene, had too many important interests involved in the interior peace of the vessel, not to exert himself at this appeal. He was seconded by all the inferior officers, who well knew that their lives, as well as their comfort, depended on staying the torrent that had so unexpectedly broken loose. But they only proved how hard it is to uphold an authority that is not established on the foundation of legitimate power. Neptune had cast aside his masquerade; and, backed by his stout forecastle-men, was preparing for a conflict that might speedily give him greater pretensions to immortal nature than those he had just rejected. Until now, the officers, partly by threats and partly by remonstrances, had so far controlled the outbreaking, that the time had been passed rather in preparations than in violence. But the marines had seized their arms; while two crowded masses of the mariners were forming on each side of the mainmast, abundantly provided with pikes, and other such weapons as could be made of the bars and handspikes of the vessel. One or two of the cooler heads among the latter had even proceeded so far as to clear away a gun, which they were pointing in-board, and in a direction that might have swept a moiety of the quarter-deck. In short, the broil had reached that pass when another blow struck from either side must have given up the vessel to plunder and massacre. The danger of such a crisis was heightened by the taunts that broke forth from profane lips, which were only opened to lavish the coarsest revilings on the persons and character of their enemies.

During the five minutes that might have flown by in these sinister and threatening symptoms of insubordination, the individual who was chiefly interested in the maintenance of discipline had manifested the most extraordinary indifference to, or rather unconsciousness of, all that was

passing near him. With his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes fastened on the placid sea, he stood motionless as the mast near which he had placed his person. Long accustomed to the noise of scenes similar to the one he had himself provoked, he heard, in the confused sounds which rose unheeded on his ear, no more than the commotion which ordinarily attended the license of such sports.

His subordinates in command, however, were far more active. Wilder had already beaten back the boldest of the seamen, and a space was cleared between the hostile parties, into which his assistants threw themselves, with the haste of men who knew how much was required at their hands. The momentary success might have been pushed too far; for believing that the spirit of mutiny was subdued, our adventurer was proceeding to improve his advantage, by seizing the most audacious of the offenders, when his prisoner was immediately torn from his grasp by twenty of his confederates.

"Who's this, that sets himself up for a commodore aboard the *Dolphin?*" exclaimed a voice in the crowd, at a most unhappy moment for the authority of the new lieutenant. "In what fashion did he come aboard us? or in what service did he learn his trade?"

"Aye, aye," continued another sinister voice, "where is the Bristol trader he was to lead into our net, and for which we lost so many of the best days in the season, at a lazy anchor?"

A general and simultaneous murmur followed, which, had such testimony been wanting, would in itself have manifested that the unknown officer was scarcely more fortunate in his present than in his recent service. Both parties united in condemning his interference, and from both sides were heard scornful opinions of his origin, mingled with unequivocal denunciations against his person.

Nothing daunted by these evidences of the danger he was in, our adventurer answered their taunts with the most scornful smiles, challenging a single individual of them all to dare to step forth, and maintain his words by suitable actions.

"Hear him!" exclaimed his auditors. "He speaks like a king's officer in chase of a smuggler!" cried one. "Aye, he's a bold 'un in a calm," said a second. "He's a Jonah, that has slipped into the cabin windows!" cried a third; "and while he stays in the *Dolphin*, luck will keep on our weather-beam." "Into the sea with him! overboard with the upstart! into the sea with him! where he'll find that a bolder and a better man has gone before him!" shouted a dozen at once; some of whom immediately made very plain demonstrations of an intention to put their threat in execution. But two forms instantly sprang from the crowd, and threw themselves, like angry lions, between Wilder and his foes. The one who was foremost in the rescue faced short upon the advancing seamen, and, with a blow from an arm that was irresistible, leveled the representative of Neptune to his feet, as if he had been a waxen image of a man. The other was not slow to imitate his example; and, as the throng receded before this secession from its own numbers, the latter, who was Fid, flourished a fist that was as big and almost as solid as a twelve-pound shot, while he vociferated, fairly frothing at the mouth with rage—

"Away with ye, ye lubbers! away with ye! Would you run foul of a single man, and he an officer, and such an officer as ye never set eyes on before, except, mayhap, in the fashion that a cat looks upon a king? I should like to see the man among ye all who can handle a heavy ship in a narrow channel, as I have seen Master Harry here handle the saucy——"

"Stand back!" cried Wilder, forcing himself between his defenders and his foes. "Stand back, I say, and leave me alone to meet the audacious villains."

"Overboard with him! overboard with them all," cried the seamen, "he and his knaves together!"

"Will you remain silent, and see murder done before your eyes?" exclaimed Mrs. Wyllys, rushing from her place of retreat, and laying a hand eagerly on the arm of the Rover.

He started, like one who was awakened

suddenly from a light sleep, looking her full and intently in the eye.

"See!" she added, pointing to the violent throng below, where every sign of a bloody struggle was exhibiting itself. "See, they kill your officer, and there is none to help him."

The look of faded marble which had so long been seated on his features vanished. Taking in the whole nature of the scene at the glace, the blood came rushing into every vein and fiber of his face. Seizing a rope which hung from the yard above his head he swung his person off the poop, and fell lightly in the very center of the crowd. Both parties fell back, while a sudden silence succeeded to a clamor that a moment before would have drowned the roar of a cataract. Making a haughty and repelling motion with his arm, he spoke, and in a voice that, if any change could be noted, was even pitched in a key less high and threatening than common. But the lowest and the deepest of its intonations reached the most distant ear, so that no one who heard was left in doubt of its meaning.

"Mutiny!" he said, in a tone that strangely balanced between irony and scorn; "open, violent, and blood-seeking mutiny! Are ye tired of your lives, men? Is there one, among ye all, who is willing to make himself an example for the good of the rest? If there be, let him lift a hand, a finger, a hair. Let him speak, look me in the eye, or dare to show that life is in him, by sign, breath or motion!"

He paused; and so general and absorbing was the spell produced by his presence and his mien, that, in all that crowd of fierce and excited spirits, there was not one so bold as to presume to brave his anger. Sailors and marines stood, alike passive, humbled, and obedient as faulty children, when arraigned before an authority from which they feel that escape is impossible. Perceiving that no voice answered, no limbs moved, nor even an eye among them all was bold enough to meet his own steady but glowing look, he continued in the same deep and commanding tone—

"It is well; reason has come of the latest; but happily for ye all it has returned. Fall back, fall back, I say; you taint the quarter-deck." The men receded a pace or two on every side of him. "Let those arms be stacked; it will be time to use them when I say there is need. And you, fellows, who have been so bold as to lift a pike without an order, have a care they do not burn your hands." A dozen staves fell upon the deck together. "Is there a drummer in this ship? let him appear!"

A terrified and cringing looking being presented himself, having found his instrument by a sort of desperate instinct.

"Now speak aloud, and let me know at once whether I command a crew of orderly and obedient men, or a set of miscreants that require some purifying before I can trust them."

The first few taps of the drum sufficed to tell the men that it was "the beat to quarters." Without hesitating, the crowd dissolved, and each of the delinquents stole silently to his station; the crew of the gun that had been turned inward managing to thrust it through its port again, with a dexterity that might have availed them greatly in time of combat. Throughout the whole affair, the Rover manifested neither anger nor impatience. Deep and settled scorn, with a high reliance on himself, had, indeed, been exhibited in his bearing, but not for an instant did it seem that he suffered passion to get the mastery of reason. And, now, that he had recalled his crew to their duty, he appeared no more elated with his success than he had been daunted by the storm which, a moment before, had threatened the dissolution of his authority. Instead of pursuing his farther purpose in haste, he waited the observance of the minutest form which etiquette, as well as use, had rendered customary on such occasions.

The officers approached to report their several divisions in readiness to engage, with exactly the same regularity as if an enemy had been in sight. The top-men and sail-trimmers were enumerated, and found prepared; shot-slugs and stoppers were handled; the magazine was even opened; the arm-chests were emptied of

their contents; and, in short, more than the ordinary preparation of an every-day exercise was observed.

"Let the yards be slung; the sheets and halyards stoppered," he said to the first lieutenant, who now displayed as intimate an acquaintance with the military as he had hitherto discovered with the nautical part of his profession. "Give the boarders their pikes and boarding-axes, sir; we will show these fellows that we dare trust them with arms."

The orders were obeyed to the letter; and then succeeded that deep and grave silence which renders a crew at quarters a sight so imposing even to those who have witnessed it from boyhood. In this manner the skillful leader of this band of desperate marauders knew how to curb their violence with the fetters of discipline. When he believed their minds brought within the proper limits, by the situation of restraint in which he had placed them, where they well knew that a word, or even an offensive look, would be met by instant punishment, he walked apart with Wilder, of whom he demanded an explanation of what had passed.

Whatever might have been the natural tendency of our adventurer to mercy, he had not been educated on the sea to look with lenity on the crime of mutiny. Had his recent escape from the wreck of the Bristol trader been already banished from his mind, the impressions of a whole life still remained to teach the necessity of keeping tight those cords which experience has so often proved are absolutely necessary to quell such turbulent bands, when removed from the pale of society, the influence of woman, and when excited by the constant collision of tempers rudely provoked and equally disposed to violence. Though he "set down naught to malice," it is certain that he did "nothing extenuate," in the account he rendered. The whole of the facts were laid before the Rover, in the direct, unvarnished language of truth.

"One cannot keep these fellows to their duty by preaching," returned the irregular chief, when the other had done. "We have no 'Execution Dock' for our delinquents, no 'yellow flag' for fleets to gaze at, no grave and wise-looking courts to thumb a book or two, and end by saying 'Hang him.' The rascals knew my eye was off them. Once before, they turned my vessel into a living evidence of that passage in the Testament which teaches humility to all, by telling us, 'that the last shall be first, and the first last.' I found a dozen round-abouts drinking and making free with the liquors of the cabin, and all the officers prisoners forward—a state of things, as you will allow, a little subversive of decency as well as decorum."

"I am amazed you should have succeeded in restoring discipline."

"I got among them single-handed, and with no other aid than a boat from the shore; but I ask no more than a place for my foot, and room for an arm, to keep a thousand such spirits in order. Now they know me, it is rare we misunderstand each other."

"You must have punished severely."

"There was justice done. Mr. Wilder, I fear you find our service a little irregular; but a month of experience will put you on a level with us, and remove all danger of such another scene." As the Rover spoke, he faced his recruit with a countenance that endeavored to be cheerful, but whose gayety could force itself no further than a frightful smile. "Come," he quickly added, "this time I set the mischief afoot myself; and, as we are completely masters, we may afford to be lenient. Besides," glancing his eyes toward the place where Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude still remained in deep suspense, awaiting his decision, "it may be well to consult the sex of our guests at such a moment."

Then, leaving his subordinate, the Rover advanced to the center of the quarter-deck, whither he immediately summoned the principal offenders. The men listened to his rebukes, which were not altogether free from admonitory warnings of what might be the consequences of a similar transgression, like creatures who stood in presence of a being of a nature superior to their own.

Though he spoke in his usual quiet tone,

the lowest of his syllables went into the ears of the most distant of the crew; and, when his brief lesson was ended, the men stood before him, not only like delinquents who had been reproved, though pardoned, but with the air of criminals who were as much condemned by their consciousness as by the general voice. Among them all was only one seaman who, perhaps from past service, was emboldened to venture a syllable in his own justification.

"As for the matter with the marines," he said, "your honor knows there is little love between us, though I allow that a quarter-deck is no place to settle our begrudgings; but, as to the gentleman who has seen fit to step into the shoes of—"

"It is my pleasure that he should remain there," interrupted the commander. "Of his merit, I alone am judge."

"Well, well, since it is your pleasure, sir, why no man may dispute it. But no account has been rendered of the Bristolman, and great expectations were had aboard here from that very ship. Your honor is a reasonable gentleman, and will not be surprised that the people who were on the lookout for the outward-bound West Indiaman, should be unwilling to take up with a battered and empty launch in her stead."

"Aye, sir, if I will it, you shall take an oar, a tiller, a thole, for your portion. No more of this! You saw the condition of his ship with your own eyes; and where is the seaman who has not, on some evil day, been compelled to admit that his art is nothing when the elements are against him? Who saved this ship, in the very gust that has robbed us of our prize? Was it your skill? or was it that of a man who has often done it before, and who may one day leave you to your ignorance to manage your own interests? It is enough that I believe him faithful. There is no time to convince your dullness of the propriety of all that's done. Away, and send me the two men who so nobly stepped between their officer and mutiny."

Then came Fid, followed by the negro, rolling along the deck, and thumbing his hat with one hand, while the other sought an awkward retreat in a certain part of his vestments.

"You have done well, my lad; you and your messmate——"

"No messmate, your honor, seeing that he is a nigger," interrupted Fid. "The chap messes with the other blacks, but we take a pull at the can, now and then, in company."

"Your friend, then, if you prefer that term."

"Aye, aye, sir, we are friendly enough at odd times, though a breeze often springs up between us. Guinea has a d——d awkward fashion of luffing up in his talk; and your honor knows it isn't always comfortable to a white man to be driven to leeward by a black. I tell him it is inconvenient. He is a good enough fellow in the main, howsomever, sir; and as he is just an African bred and born, I hope you'll be good enough to overlook his little failings."

"Were I otherwise disposed," returned the Rover, "his steadiness and activity to-day would plead in his favor."

"Yes, yes, sir, he is somewhat steady, which is more than I can always say in my own behalf. Then, as for seamanship, there are few men who are his betters; I wish your honor would take the trouble to walk forward, and look at the heart he turned into the main-stay, no later than the last calm; it takes the strain as easy as a small sin sits upon a rich man's conscience."

"I am satisfied with your description; you call him Guinea?"

"Call him by anything along that coast; for he is in no way particular, seeing that he was never christened, and he knows nothing at all of the bearings and distances of religion. His lawful name is S'ip, or Shipio Africa, taken, as I suppose, from the circumstance that he was first shipped from that quarter of the world. But as respects names, the fellow is as meek as a lamb; you may call him anything, provided you don't call him too late to his grog."

All this time the African stood rolling his large dark eyes in every direction except toward the speakers, perfectly con-

tent that his long-tried shipmate should serve as his interpreter. The spirit which had so recently been awakened in the Rover seemed already to be subsiding; for the frown which had gathered on his brow was dissipating in a look which bore rather the character of curiosity than any fiercer emotion.

"You have sailed long in company, my lad," he carelessly continued, addressing his words to neither in particular.

"Full and by, in many a gale, and many a calm, your honor. 'Tis four-and-twenty years the last equinox, Guinea, since Master Harry fell athwart our hawse; and then we had been together three years in the *Thunderer*, besides the run we made round the Horn, in the Bay privateer."

"Ah! you have been four-and-twenty years with Mr. Wilder. It is not so remarkable that you should set a value on his life."

"I should as soon think of setting a price on the King's crown!" interrupted the straight-going seaman. "I overheard the lads, d'ye see, sir, just plotting to throw the three of us overboard, and so we thought it time to say something in our favor; and, words not always being at hand, the black saw fit to fill up the time with something that might answer the turn quite as well. No, no, he is no great talker, that Guinea; nor, for that matter, can I say much in my own favor, in this particular; but seeing that we clapped a stopper on their movements, your honor will allow that we did as well as if we had spoken as smartly as a young midshipman fresh from college, who is always for hailing a top in Latin, you know, sir, for want of understanding the proper language."

The Rover smiled, and he glanced his eye aside, apparently in quest of our adventurer. Not seeing him at hand, he was tempted to push his inquiries a little further, though too much governed by self-respect to let the intense curiosity by which he was influenced escape him in any direct and manifest interrogation. But an instant's recollection recalled him to himself, and he discarded the idea as unworthy of his character.

"Your services shall not be forgotten. Here is gold," he said, offering a handful of the metal to the negro, as the one nearest his own person. "You will divide it, like honest shipmates; and you may ever rely on my protection."

Scipio drew back, and with a motion of his elbow, replied—

"His honor will give 'em Masser Harry."

"Your Master Harry has enough of his own, lad, he has no need of money."

"S'ip no need 'em eider."

"You will please to overlook the fellow's manners, sir," said Fid, very coolly interposing his own hand, and deliberately pocketing the offering; "but I needn't tell as old a seaman as your honor, that Guinea is no country to scrape down the seams of a man's behavior in. Howsomever, I can say this much for him, which is, that he thanks your honor just as heartily as if you had given him twice the sum. Make a bow to his honor, boy, and do some credit to the company you have kept. And now, since this little difficulty about the money is gotten over, by my presence of mind, with your honor's leave, I'll just step aloft, and cast loose the lashings of that bit of a tailor on the larboard fore-yard-arm. The chap was never made for a top-man, as you may see, sir, by the fashion in which he crosses his lower stanchions. That fellow will make a carrick bend with his legs as easily as I could do the same with a yarn of white line!"

The Rover signed for him to retire; and, turning where he stood, he found himself confronted by Wilder. The eyes of the confederates met; and a slight color bespoke the consciousness of the former. Regaining his self-possession on the instant, however, he smilingly alluded to the character of Fid; and then he directed his lieutenant to have the "retreat from quarters" beat.

The guns were secured, the stoppers loosened, the magazine closed, the ports lashed, and the crew withdrew to their several duties, like men whose violence had been completely subdued by the triumphant influence of a master spirit. The Rover then disappeared from the

deck, which, for a time, was left to the care of an officer of the proper rank.

CHAPTER XXI.

Thief.—"'Tis in the malice of mankind, that he thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery."—TIMON OF ATHENS.

THROUGHOUT the whole of that day no change occurred in the weather. The sleeping ocean lay like a waving and glittering mirror, smooth and polished on its surface, though, as usual, the long rising and swelling of a heavy ground-swell announced the commotion that was in action at a distant place. From the time that he left the deck, until the sun laved its burnished orb in the sea, the Rover was seen no more. Satisfied with his victory, he no longer seemed to apprehend that it was possible any should be bold enough to plot the overthrow of his power. This apparent confidence in himself did not fail to impress his people favorably. As no neglect of duty was overlooked, nor any offense left to go unpunished, an eye that was not seen was believed to be ever on them, and an invisible hand was thought to be at all times uplifted, ready to strike or to reward. It was by a similar system of energy in moments of need, and of forbearance when authority was irksome, that this extraordinary man had so long succeeded, not only in keeping down domestic treason, but in eluding the address and industry of more open enemies.

When the watch was set for the night, however, and the ship lay in profound silence, the Rover was again seen walking to and fro across the poop, of which he was now the solitary occupant. The vessel had drifted in the Gulf Stream so far to the northward, that the little mound of blue had long sunk below the edge of the ocean; and she was again surrounded, far as human eye might see, by an interminable world of water. As not a breath of air was stirring, the sails had been handed, the naked spars rearing themselves, in the gloom of the evening, like those of a ship at anchor. In short, it was one of those hours of entire repose that the elements occasionally grant to such adventurers as trust their fortunes to the capricious and treacherous winds.

Even the men whose duty it was to be on the alert were emboldened by the general tranquillity to become careless on their watch, and to cast their persons between the guns, or on different parts of the vessel, seeking that rest which the forms of discipline and good order prohibited them from enjoying in their hammocks. Here and there, indeed, the head of a drowsy officer was seen nodding with the lazy heaving of the ship, as he leaned against the bulwarks, or rested his person on the carriage of some gun that was placed beyond the sacred limits of the quarter-deck. One form alone was erect and vigilant, maintaining a watchful eye over the whole. This was Wilder, whose turn it was again to keep the deck.

For two hours not the slightest communication occurred between the Rover and his lieutenant. Both rather avoided than sought the intercourse; for each had his own secret sources of meditation. After the long and unusual silence the former stopped short in his walk, and looked steadily on the still motionless figure on deck beneath him.

"Mr. Wilder," he at length said, "the air is fresher on this poop, and more free from the impurities of the vessel Will you ascend?"

The other complied; and they walked silently, and with even steps together, as seamen are wont to pace the deck in the hours of the night.

"We had a troublesome morning, Wilder," the Rover resumed, unconsciously betraying the subject of his thoughts, and speaking always in a voice so guarded, that no ears but those of his new lieutenant could hear him; "were you ever so near that pretty precipice, a mutiny, before?"

"The man who is hit is nigher to danger than he who feels the wind of the ball."

"Ah! you have then been bearded in your ship! Give yourself no uneasiness on account of the personal animosity which a few of the fellows saw fit to manifest

against yourself. I am acquainted with their most secret thoughts, as you shall shortly know."

"I confess that, in your place, I should sleep on a thorny pillow, with such evidences of the temper of my men before my mind. A few hours of disorder might deliver the vessel, on any day, into the hands of the government, and your own life to——"

"The executioner! And why not yours?" demanded the Rover so quickly as to give, in a slight degree, an air of distrust to his manner. "But the eye that has often seen battles seldom winks. Mine has too often and too steadily looked danger in the face, to be alarmed at the sight of a king's pennant. Besides, it is not usual for us to be on this ticklish coast; the islands and the Spanish Main are less dangerous cruising-grounds."

"And yet have you ventured here at a time when success against the enemy has given the admiral leisure to employ a powerful force in your pursuit."

"I had a reason for it. It is not always easy to separate the commander from the man. If I have temporarily forgotten the obligations of the former in the wishes of the latter, so far, at least, no harm has come of it. I may have tired of chasing your indolent Don, and of driving guarda-costas into port. This life of ours is full of excitement, which I love: to me there is interest even in a mutiny!"

"I like not treason. In this particular, I confess myself like the boor who loses his resolution in the dark. While the enemy is in view, I hope you will find me true as other men; but sleeping over a mine is not an amusement to my taste."

"So much for want of practice! Hazard is hazard, come in what shape it may; and the human mind can as readily be taught to be indifferent to secret machinations as to open risk. Hush! Struck the bell six or seven?"

"Seven. You see the men slumber, as before. Instinct would wake them, were their hour at hand."

"'Tis well. I feared the time had passed. Yes, Wilder, I love suspense; it keeps the faculties from dying, and throws a man upon the better principles of his nature. Perhaps I owe it to a wayward spirit, but, to me, there is sometimes enjoyment in an adverse wind."

"And in a calm?"

"Calms may have their charms for your quiet spirits, but in them there is nothing to be overcome. One cannot stir the elements, though one may counteract their workings."

"You have not entered on this trade of yours——"

"Yours!"

"I might, now, have said 'of ours,' since I, too, have become a rover."

"You are still in your novitiate," resumed the other, whose quick mind had already passed the point at which the conversation had arrived; "and high enjoyment had I in being the one who shrived you in your wishes. You manifested a skill in playing around your subject without touching it, which gives me hope of an apt scholar."

"But no penitent, I trust."

"That as it may be; we are all liable to have our moments of weakness, when we look on life as book-men paint it, and think of being probationers where we are put to enjoy. I angled for you as the fisherman plays with the trout. Nor did I overlook the danger of deception. You were faithful on the whole; though I protest against your ever again acting so much against my interests as to intrigue to keep the game from coming to my net."

"When, and how have I done this? You have yourself admitted——"

"That the *Royal Caroline* was prettily handled, and wrecked by the will of Heaven; I speak of nobler quarries, now, than such as any hawk can fly at. Are you a woman-hater that you would fain frighten the noble-minded woman, and the sweet girl, who are beneath our feet at this moment, from enjoying the high privilege of your company?"

"Was it treacherous to wish to save a woman from a fate like that, for instance, which hung over them both this very day? For, while your authority exists in this ship, I do not think there can be danger, even to her who is so lovely."

"By heavens, Wilder, you do me no more than justice. Before harm should come to that fair innocent, with this hand would I put the match into the magazine, and send her, all spotless as she is, to the place from which she seems to have fallen."

Our adventurer listened greedily to these words, though he little liked the strong language of admiration with which the Rover was pleased to clothe his generous sentiment.

"How did you know of my wish to serve them?" he demanded, after a pause, which neither seemed in any hurry to break.

"Could I mistake your language! I thought it plain enough when I heard it."

"Heard! My confession was then made when I least believed it."

The Rover did not answer; but his companion now understood, from his smile, that he had been the dupe of an audacious and completely successful masquerade, and that in the old seaman, Bob Blunt, he had in truth been communing with his commander in person. The deportment of Joram, and the unaccountable disappearance of the skiff, were now completely explained. Startled at discovering how intricate were the toils in which he had rushed, and possibly vexed at being so thoroughly overreached, he made several turns across the deck without speaking.

"I confess myself deceived," he at length said, "and henceforth I shall submit to you as a master from whom one may learn, but who can never be surpassed. The landlord of the 'Foul Anchor,' at least, acted in his proper person, whoever might have been the aged seaman!"

"Honest Joe Joram! A useful man to a distressed mariner, you must allow. How did you like the Newport pilot?"

"Was he an agent, too?"

"For the job merely. I trust such knaves no further than their own eyes can see. But, hist! Heard you nothing?"

"I thought a rope had fallen into the water."

"Aye, it is so. Now you shall find how thoroughly I overlook these turbulent gentlemen."

The Rover then cut short the dialogue, which was growing deeply interesting to his companion, and moved with a light step to the stern, over which he hung, for a few moments, by himself, like a man who found a pleasure in gazing at the surface of the sea. But a slight noise, like that produced by agitated ropes, caught the ear of his companion, who placed himself at the side of his commander, where he did not wait long without gaining another proof of the manner in which he, as well as all the rest of the crew, were circumvented by the devices of their leader.

A man was guardedly, and from his situation, with some difficulty, moving round the quarter of the ship, by the aid of the ropes and moldings, which afforded him sufficient means to effect his object. He soon reached a stern-ladder, where he stood suspended, endeavoring to discern which of the two forms that were overlooking his proceedings was that of the individual he sought.

"Are you there, Davis?" said the Rover, in a voice but little above a whisper, first laying his hand lightly on Wilder, as if he would tell him to attend. "I fear you have been seen or heard."

"No fear of that, your honor. I got out of the port by the cabin bulkhead; the afterguard are all as sound asleep as if they had the watch below."

"It is well. What news do you bring from the people?"

"Lord! your honor may tell them to go to church, and the stoutest sea-dog of them all wouldn't dare to say he had forgotten his prayers."

"You think them in a better temper than they were?"

"You know it, sir. Not but the will to work mischief is to be found in two or three of the men; but they dare not trust each other. Your honor has such winning ways with you, that one never knows when he is on safe grounds in setting up to be master."

"This is ever the way with your disor-

ganizers," muttered the Rover, just loud enough to be heard by Wilder. "A little more honesty might make them dangerous; as it is, their knavery defeats itself. And how did these fellows receive the lenity? Did I well? or must there yet be punishment?"

"It is better as it stands, sir. The people know you have a good memory, and they talk already of the danger of adding another reckoning to this they feel certain you have not forgotten. There is the captain of the forecastle, who is a little bitter, as usual, and the more so, just now, on account of the knock-down blow he got from the black."

"He is a troublesome rascal; a settling day must come at last between us."

"It will be easy to expend him in boat-service, sir, and the ship's company will be all the better for his absence."

"Well, well; no more of him," interrupted the Rover, a little impatiently, as if he liked not that his companion should look too deeply into the policy of his government so early in his initiation. "I will see to him. If I mistake not, fellow, you overacted your own part to-day, and were a little too forward in leading on the trouble."

"I hope your honor will remember that the crew had been piped to mischief; besides, there could be no great harm in washing the powder off a few marines."

"Aye, but you pressed the point after your officer had seen fit to interfere. Be wary in future, lest you make your acting too true to nature, and get applauded in a manner quite as natural."

The fellow promised caution and amendment; and then he was dismissed with his reward in gold, and an injunction to be secret in his return. So soon as the interview was ended, the Rover and Wilder resumed their walk; the former having made sure that no eavesdropper was at hand to pry into the secret of his connection with the spy. The silence was again long and thoughtful.

"Good ears," recommenced the Rover, "are nearly as important, in a ship like this, as a stout heart. The rogues forward must not be permitted to eat of the fruit of knowledge, lest we, who are in the cabins, die."

"This is a perilous service in which we are embarked," observed his companion, involuntarily exposing his real thoughts.

The Rover made many turns across the deck before he answered. When he spoke, it was in a voice so bland and gentle, that his words sounded more like the admonitory tones of a considerate friend, than like the language of a man who had long been associated with a set of beings so rude and unprincipled as those whom he commanded.

"You are still on the threshold of life, Mr. Wilder," he said, "and it is all before you to choose the path on which you will go. As yet, you have been present at no violation of what the world calls its laws; nor is it too late to say you never will be. I may have been selfish in my wish to gain you; but try me, and you will find that self, though often active, cannot, or does not, long hold its dominion over my mind. Say but the word, and you are free; it is to destroy the little evidence which exists of your having made one of my crew. The land is not far beyond that streak of fading light; before to-morrow's sun shall set, your foot may be on it."

"Then, why not both? If this irregular life be not fit for me, it is unfit for you. Could I hope——"

"What would you say?" calmly demanded the Rover, after waiting sufficiently long to be sure his companion hesitated to continue. "Speak freely; your words are for the ears of a friend."

"Then, as a friend, will I unbosom myself. You say the land is here in the west. It would be easy for you and me, men nurtured on the sea, to lower this boat into the water, and, profiting by the darkness, long ere our absence could be known, we should be lost to the eye of any who might seek us."

"Whither would you steer?"

"To the shores of America, where shelter and peace might be found in a thousand secret places."

"Would you have a man, who has so long lived a prince among his followers, become a beggar in the land of strangers?"

"But you have gold. Are we not masters here? Who is there that might dare even to watch our movements, until we were pleased ourselves to throw off the authority with which we are clothed? Ere the middle watch was set, all might be done."

"Alone! Would you go alone?"

"No; not entirely; that is, it would scarcely become us, as men, to desert the females, to the brutal power of those we should leave behind."

"And would it become us as men, to desert those who put faith in our fidelity? Mr. Wilder, your proposal would make me a villain! Lawless, in the opinion of the world, have I long been; but a traitor to my faith and plighted word, never! The hour may come when the beings whose world is in this ship shall part; but the separation must be open, voluntary, and manly. You never knew what drew me into the haunts of man, when we first met in the town of Boston?"

"Never," returned Wilder, in a tone of deep disappointment; for hope had caused his very heart to beat quicker.

"You shall hear. A sturdy follower had fallen into the hands of the minions of the law. It was necessary to save him. He was a man I little loved, but he was one who had been honest, after his own opinions. I could not desert the victim—nor could any but I effect his escape. Gold and artifice succeeded; the fellow is now here to sing the praises of his commander to the crew. Could I forfeit a good name, obtained at so much hazard?"

"You would forfeit the good opinion of knaves, to gain a reputation among those whose commendations are an honor."

"I know not. You little understand the nature of man, if you are now to learn that he has pride in maintaining a reputation for even vice, when he has once purchased notoriety by its exhibition. Besides, I am not fitted for the world, as it is found among your dependent colonists."

"You claim your birth, perhaps, from the mother country?"

"I am no better than a poor provincial, sir; a humble satellite of the mighty sun. You have seen my flags, Mr. Wilder; but there was one wanting among them all; aye, and one which, had it existed, it would have been my pride, my glory, to have upheld with my heart's best blood!"

"I know not what you mean."

"I need not tell a seaman like you, how many noble rivers pour their waters into the sea along this coast of which we have been speaking—how many wide and commodious havens abound there—or how many sails whiten the ocean, that are manned by men who first drew breath on that spacious and peaceful soil?"

"Surely I know the advantages of my native country."

"I fear not," quickly returned the Rover. "Were they known as they should be, by you and others like you, the flag I mentioned would soon be found in every sea; nor would the natives of our country have to succumb to the hirelings of a foreign prince."

"I will not affect to misunderstand your meaning; for I have known others as visionary as yourself in fancying that such an event may arrive."

"May! As certain as that star will set in the ocean, or that day is to succeed to night, it *must*. Had that flag been abroad, Mr. Wilder, no man would have ever heard the name of the *Red Rover*."

"The King has a service of his own, and it is open to all his subjects alike."

"I could be the subject of a king; but to be the subject of a subject, Wilder, exceeds the bounds of my poor patience. I was educated, I might also have said, born, in one of his vessels; and how often have I been made to feel, in bitterness, that an ocean separated my birthplace from the footstool of his throne! Would you think it, sir; one of his commanders dared to couple the name of my country with an epithet I will not wound your ear by repeating?"

"I hope you taught the scoundrel manners."

The Rover faced his companion, and there was a ghastly smile on his face, as he answered.

"He never repeated the offense. 'Twas his blood or mine; dearly did he pay the forfeit of his brutality!"

"You fought like men, and fortune favored the injured party?"

"We fought, sir. But I had dared to raise my hand against a native of the holy isle! It is enough, Mr. Wilder; the King rendered a faithful subject desperate, and he has had reason to repent it. Enough for the present; another time I may say more. Good night."

Wilder saw the figure of his companion descend the ladder to the quarter-deck; and then he was left to pursue the current of his thoughts alone, during the remainder of a watch which, to his impatience, seemed without an end.

CHAPTER XXII.

"She made good view of me; indeed, so much,
That sure, me thought, her eyes had lost her tongue,
For she did speak in starts distractedly."
—TWELFTH NIGHT.

THOUGH most of the crew of the *Dolphin* slept, there were bright and anxious eyes still open in a different part of the vessel. The Rover had relinquished his cabin to Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude, from the moment they entered the ship, and we shall shift the scene to that apartment (already sufficiently described to render the reader familiar with the objects it contained), resuming the action of the tale at an early part of the discourse just related in the preceding chapter.

It will not be necessary to dwell upon the feelings with which the females had witnessed the disturbances of that day; the conjectures and suspicions to which they gave rise may be apparent in what is about to follow. A mild soft light fell from the lamp of wrought and massive silver, that was suspended from the upper deck, obliquely upon the pensive countenance of the governess, while a few of its strongest rays lighted the more youthful features of her companion. The background was occupied, like a dark shadow in a picture, by the dusky form of the slumbering Cassandra. At the moment when the curtain must be drawn from before this quiet scene, the pupil was seeking, in the averted eyes of her instructress, an answer to a question which the tongue of the latter appeared reluctant to accord.

"I repeat, my dearest madam," said Gertrude, "that the fashion of these ornaments, no less than their materials, is extraordinary in a ship."

"And what would you infer from the fact?"

"I know not. I would that we were safe in the house of my father."

"God grant it! It may be imprudent to be longer silent. Gertrude, frightful, horrible suspicions have been engendered in my mind by what we have this day witnessed."

The cheek of the young girl blanched, while she demanded an explanation with her eyes.

"I have long been familiar with the usages of a vessel of war," continued the governess, who had only paused in order to review the causes of her suspicions in her own mind, "but never have I seen such customs, as each hour unfolds in this vessel."

"Of what do you suspect her?"

The look of engrossing, maternal anxiety that the lovely interrogator received in reply to this question, might have startled one whose mind had been more accustomed to muse on the depravity of human nature than the spotless being who received it; but to Gertrude it conveyed no more than a general and vague sensation of alarm.

"Why do you thus regard me, my governess — my mother!" she exclaimed, bending forward, and laying a hand imploringly on the arm of the other, as if to arouse her from a trance.

"Yes, I will speak. It is safer that you should know the worst, than that your innocence should be liable to be abused. I distrust the character of this ship, and of all that belongs to her."

"All!"

"Yes; of all."

"There may be wicked and evil-intentioned men in his majesty's fleet; but we are surely safe from them, since fear of punishment, if not fear of disgrace, will be our protection."

"I dread lest we find that the lawless spirits who harbor here submit to no laws except those of their own enacting, nor acknowledge any authority but that which exists among themselves."

"This would make them pirates!"

"And pirates, I fear, we shall find them."

"Pirates? What! all?"

"Even all. Where one is guilty of such a crime, it is clear that the associates cannot be free from suspicion."

"But, dear madam, we know that one among them, at least, is innocent; since he came with ourselves, and under circumstances that will not admit of deception."

"I know not. There are different degrees of turpitude, as there are different tempers to commit it! I fear that all who may lay claim to be honest, in this vessel, are here."

The eyes of Gertrude sank to the floor and her lips quivered, partly in a tremor she could not control, and in part through an emotion that she found inexplicable to herself.

"Since we know whence our late companion came," she said in an undertone, "I think you do him wrong, however right your suspicions may prove as to the rest."

"I may possibly be wrong as to him, I admit, but it is important that we know the worst. Command yourself, my love; our young attendant ascends; some knowledge of the truth may be gained from him."

Mrs. Wyllys gave her pupil an expressive sign to compose her features, while she herself resumed a calmness of mien that might have deceived one far more practiced than the boy, who now came slowly into the cabin. Gertrude buried her face in a part of her attire, while the former addressed the youth, in a tone equally divided between kindness and concern.

"Roderick, child," she commenced, "your eyelids are getting heavy. The service of a ship must be new to you?"

"It is so old as to keep me from sleeping on my watch," coldly returned the boy.

"A careful mother would be better for one of your years than the school of the boatswain. What is your age, Roderick?"

"I have seen years enough to be both wiser and better," he answered, not without a shade of thought upon his brow. "Another month will make me twenty."

"Twenty! you trifle with my curiosity, urchin."

"Did I say twenty, madam? Fifteen would be much nearer to the truth."

"I believe you. And how many of those years have you passed upon the water?"

"But two, in truth; though I often think them ten; and yet there are times when they seem but a day!"

"You are romantic early, boy. And how do you like the trade of war?"

"War!"

"Of war. I speak plainly, do I not? Those who serve in a vessel that is constructed expressly for battle, follow the trade of war."

"O! yes; war is certainly our trade."

"And have you yet seen any of its horrors? Has this ship been in combat since your service began?"

"This ship!"

"Surely, this ship; have you ever sailed in another?"

"Never."

"Then, it is of this ship that one must question you. Is prize-money plenty among your crew?"

"Abundant; they never want."

"Then the vessel and Captain are both favorites. The sailor loves the ship and commander that give him an active life."

"Aye, madam; our lives are active here. And some there are among us, too, who love both ship and commander."

"And have you mother, or friend, to profit by your earnings?"

"Have I——"

Struck with the tone or stupor with which the boy responded to her queries, the governess turned her head, to cast a rapid glance at the language of his countenance. He stood in a sort of senseless amazement, looking her full in the face, but with an eye so vacant as to prove that

he was not sensible of the image that filled it.

"Tell me, Roderick," she continued, careful not to awaken his jealousy by any sudden allusion to his manner, "tell me of this life of yours. You find it merry?"

"I find it sad."

"'Tis strange. The young ship-boys are usually among the merriest of mortals. Perhaps your officer treats you with severity."

No answer was given.

"I am right; your Captain is a tyrant."

"You are wrong; never has he said a harsh or unkind word to me."

"Ah! then he is gentle and kind. You are very happy, Roderick."

"I—happy, madam?"

"I speak plainly, and in English—happy."

"O! yes; we are very happy here."

"It is well. A discontented ship is no paradise. And you are often in port, Roderick, to taste the sweets of the land?"

"I care but little for the land, madam, could I only have friends in the ship that love me."

"And you have not? Is not Mr. Wilder your friend?"

"I know but little of him; I never saw him before——"

"When, Roderick?"

"Before we met in Newport."

"In Newport?"

"Surely you know we both came from Newport, last?"

"Ah! I comprehend you. Then your acquaintance with Mr. Wilder commenced in Newport? It was while the ship was laying off the fort?"

"It was. I carried him the order to take command of the Bristol trader. He had only joined us the night before."

"So lately! It was a young acquaintance, indeed. But I suppose your commander knew his merits?"

"It is so hoped among the people. But——"

"You were speaking, Roderick."

"None here dare question the Captain for his reasons. Even *I* am obliged to be mute."

"Even *you!*" exclaimed Mrs. Wyllys, in a surprise that for the moment overcame her self-restraint. But the thought in which the boy was lost appeared to prevent his observing the sudden change in her manner. Indeed, so little did he know what was passing, that the governess touched the hand of Gertrude, and silently pointing out the insensible figure of the lad, without the slightest apprehension that the movement would be observed.

"What think you, Roderick," continued his interrogator, "would he refuse to answer *us* also?"

The boy started; and, as consciousness shot into his glance, it fell upon the countenance of Gertrude.

"Though her beauty be so rare," he answered, with vehemence, "let her not prize it too highly. Woman cannot tame his temper!"

"Is he then so hard of heart? Think you that a question from this fair one would be denied?"

"Hear me, lady," he said, with an earnestness that was no less remarkable than the plaintive softness of the tones in which he spoke; "I have seen more in the last two crowded years of my life than many youths would witness between childhood and the age of man. This is no place for innocence and beauty. O! quit the ship, if you leave it as you came, without a deck to lay your head under!"

"It may be too late to follow such advice," Mrs. Wyllys gravely replied, glancing her eye at the silent Gertrude as she spoke. "But tell me more of this extraordinary vessel, Roderick; you were not born to fill the station in which I find you?"

The boy shook his head, but remained with downcast eyes, apparently indisposed to answer.

"How is it that I find the *Dolphin* bearing different hues to-day from what she did yesterday? and why is it that neither then, nor now, does she resemble in her paint the slaver of Newport harbor?"

"And why is it," returned the boy, with a smile, in which melancholy struggled powerfully with bitterness, "that

none can look into the secret heart of him who makes these changes at will? If all remained the same but the paint of the ship, one might still be happy in her!"

"Then, Roderick, you are not happy; shall I intercede with Captain Heidegger for your discharge?"

"I could never wish to serve another."

"How! Do you complain, and yet embrace your fetters?"

"I complain not."

The governess eyed him closely; and, after a moment's pause, she continued:

"Is it usual to see such riotous conduct among the crew as we have this day witnessed?"

"It is not. You have little to fear from the people; he who brought them under knows how to keep them down."

"They are enlisted by order of the King?"

"The King! Yes, surely; a king who has no equal."

"But they dared to threaten the life of Mr. Wilder. Is a seaman, in a king's ship, usually so bold?"

The boy glanced a look at Mrs. Wyllys, as if he would say he understood her affected ignorance of the character of the vessel, but he chose to continue silent.

"Think you, Roderick," continued the governess, who no longer deemed it necessary to pursue her covert inquiries on that particular subject; "think you, Roderick, that the Rov—that is, that Captain Heidegger will suffer us to land at the first port which offers?"

"Many have been passed since you reached the ship."

"Aye, many that are inconvenient; but when one shall be gained where his pursuits will allow his ship to enter?"

"Such places are not common."

"But, should it occur, do you think he will permit us to land? We have gold to pay him for his trouble."

"He cares not for gold. I never ask him for it, that he does not fill my hand."

"You must be happy then. Plenty of gold will compensate for a cold look at times."

"Never!" returned the boy, with quickness and energy. "Had I the ship filled with the dross, I would give it all to bring a look of kindness into his eye."

Mrs. Wyllys started, no less at the fervid manner of the lad than at the language. Rising from her seat, she approached nigher to him, and in a situation where the light of the lamp fell fuller upon his person. She saw the large drop that broke out from beneath a long and silken lash to roll down a cheek which, though embrowned by the sun, was gradually blushing with the color that stole into it, as her own gaze became more settled; and then her eyes fell slowly and keenly along the whole form of the lad, until they reached the feet that were so delicate that they seemed barely able to uphold him. The usually mild countenance of the governess turned to one of cold regard, and her whole form elevated itself into a chaste matronly dignity, as she sternly asked—

"Boy, have you a mother?"

"I know not," was the answer that came from lips that barely severed to permit the smothered sounds to escape.

"It is enough; another time I will speak farther with you. Cassandra will in future do the service of this cabin; when I have need of you, the gong shall be touched."

The head of Roderick fell to his bosom. He shrunk from before the cold and searching eye which followed his form until it had disappeared through the hatch. The moment he had disappeared Mrs. Wyllys caught Gertrude to her bosom, straining the astonished but affectionate girl to her heart in a way to show how precious she was at that fearful moment.

A gentle tap at the door broke in upon the flood of reflections which were crowding on the mind of the governess. She gave the customary answer; and, before time was allowed for any interchange of ideas between her and her pupil, the Rover entered.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I melt, and am not of stronger earth than others."
—CORIOLANUS.

THE females received their visitor with a restraint which will be easily understood

when the subject of their recent conversation is recollected. The sinking of Gertrude's form was hurried, but her governess maintained the coldness of her air with greater self-composure. Still there was anxious concern in the watchful glance that she threw toward her guest, as if she would anticipate the motive of his visit before he spoke.

The countenance of the Rover himself was thoughtful to gravity. He bowed as he came within the influence of the lamp, and his voice was heard muttering some low and hasty syllables, that conveyed no meaning to the ears of his listeners. Indeed, so great was the abstraction in which he was lost, that he had evidently prepared to throw his person on the vacant divan, without explanation or apology, like one who took possession of his own; though recollection returned just in time to prevent this breach of decorum. Smiling, and repeating his bow, with a still deeper inclination, he advanced with perfect self-possession to the table, where he expressed his fears that Mrs. Wyllys might deem his visit unseasonable, or perhaps not announced with sufficient ceremony. During this short introduction his voice was bland as woman's, and his mien as courteous as if he actually felt himself an intruder in the cabin of a vessel in which he was literally a monarch.

"But unseasonable as the hour is," he continued, "I should have gone to my cot with a consciousness of not having discharged all the duties of an attentive and considerate host, had I forgotten to reassure you of the tranquillity of the ship, after the scene you have witnessed. I have pleasure in saying that the humor of my people is already expended, and that lambs, in their nightly folds, are not more placid than they are this minute in their hammocks."

"The authority that so promptly quelled the disturbance is happily ever present to protect us," returned the cautious governess; "we repose entirely on your discretion and generosity."

"You have not misplaced your confidence. From the danger of mutiny, at least, you are exempt."

"And from all others, I trust."

"This is a wild and fickle element we dwell on," he answered, while he bowed his acknowledgment, taking the seat to which the other invited him by a motion of the hand; "but you know its character, and need not be told that we seamen are seldom certain of any of our movements. I loosened the cords of discipline myself to-day, and in some measure invited the broil that followed; but it is past, like the hurricane and the squall; the ocean is not now smoother than the tempers of my knaves."

"I have often witnessed these rude sports in vessels of the King, but I do not remember to have known any more serious result than the settlement of some ancient quarrel, or some odd freak of nautical humor, which has commonly proved as harmless as it has been quaint."

"Aye; but the ship which often runs the hazard of the shoals gets wrecked at last," muttered the Rover. "I rarely give the quarter-deck up to people without keeping a vigilant watch on their humors; but—to-day——"

"You were speaking of to-day."

"Neptune, with his coarse devices, is no stranger to you, madam?"

"I have seen the god in times past."

"'Twas thus I understood it; under the line?"

"And elsewhere."

"Elsewhere!" repeated the other, in a tone of disappointment. "Aye, the sturdy despot is to be found in every sea; and hundreds of ships, and ships of size, too, are to be seen scorching in the calms of the equator. It was idle to give the subject a second thought!"

"You have been pleased to observe something that has escaped my ear."

The Rover started; for he had again rather muttered than spoken the preceding sentence aloud. Casting a searching glance around him, as it might be to assure himself that no impertinent listener had found means to pry into the mysteries of a mind he seldom saw fit to lay open to the examination of his associates, he regained his self-possession, and resumed

the discourse with a manner as undisturbed as if it had received no interruption.

"I had forgotten that your sex is as timorous as it is fair," he added, with a smile so insinuating and gentle, that the governess cast an involuntary and uneasy glance toward her charge, "or I might have been earlier with my assurances of safety."

"They are welcome even now."

"And your young and gentle friend," he continued, inclining toward Gertrude, though he still addressed his words to the governess: "her slumbers will be none the heavier for what has passed."

"The innocent seldom find an uneasy pillow."

"There is a holy and unsearchable mystery in that truth; the innocent pillow their heads in quiet! Would to God the guilty might find some refuge, too, against the sting of thought! But we live in a world, and in time, when men cannot be sure even of themselves."

He then paused, and looked about him with a smile so haggard that the anxious governess unconsciously drew nigher her pupil, like one who was ready to yield protection against the uncertain designs of a maniac. Her visitor, however, remained in a silence so long and deep that she felt the necessity of removing the awkward embarrassment of their situation by speaking herself.

"Do you find Mr. Wilder as much inclined to mercy as yourself?" she asked. "There would be merit in his forbearance, since he appeared to be the particular object of the anger of the mutineers."

"And yet you saw he was not without friends. You witnessed the devotion of the men who stood forth so bravely in his behalf?"

"I did; and find it remarkable that he should have been able, in so short a time, to conquer thus completely two so stubborn natures."

"Four-and-twenty years are not an acquaintance of a day."

"And does their friendship bear so old a date?"

"I have heard that time counted between them. It is very certain that the youth is bound to those uncouth companions of his by some extraordinary tie! Perhaps this is not the first of their service."

Mrs. Wyllys looked grieved. Although prepared to believe that Wilder was a secret agent of the Rover, she had endeavored to hope his connection with the freebooters was susceptible of some explanation more favorable to his character. However he might be implicated in the common guilt of those who pursued the reckless fortunes of that proscribed ship, it was evident he bore a heart too generous to wish to see her, and her young and guileless charge, the victims of the licentiousness of his associates. His repeated and mysterious warnings no longer needed explanation. Indeed, all that had been dark and inexplicable, both in the previous and unaccountable glimmerings of her own mind, and in the extraordinary conduct of the inmates of the ship, was at each instant becoming capable of solution. She now remembered in the person and countenance of the Rover the form and features of the individual who had spoken the Bristol trader from the rigging of the slaver—a form which had unaccountably haunted her imagination during her residence in his ship, like an image recalled from some dim and distant period. Then she saw at once the difficulty that Wilder might have in laying open a secret in which not only his life was involved, but which, to a mind that was not hardened in vice, involved a penalty not less severe—that of the loss of their esteem. In short, a good deal of that which the reader has found no difficuly in comprehending was also becoming clear to the faculties of the governess, though much still remained obscured in doubts that she could neither solve, nor yet entirely banish from her thoughts. On all these points she had leisure to reflect, for her guest, or host, whichever he might be called, seemed in no wise disposed to interrupt her reverie.

"It is wonderful," Mrs. Wyllys at length resumed, "that beings so uncouth should be influenced by the same attachments as

those which unite the educated and the refined."

"It is wonderful, as you say," returned the other, like one awakening from a dream. "I would give a thousand of the brightest guineas that ever came from the mint of George II. to know the private history of that youth."

"Is he then a stranger to you?" demanded Gertrude, with the quickness of thought.

The Rover turned an eye on her that was vacant for the moment, but in which consciousness and expression began to steal as he gazed, until the foot of the governess was trembling with the nervous excitement that pervaded her frame.

"Who shall pretend to know the heart of man?" he answered, again inclining his head as it might be in acknowledgment of her perfect right to his homage. "All are strangers till we can read their thoughts."

"To pry into the mysteries of the human mind is a privilege which few possess," coldly remarked the governess. "The world must often be tried and thoroughly known, before we can pretend to judge of the motives of those around us."

"And yet it is a pleasant world to those who have the heart to make it merry," cried the Rover, with one of those startling transitions which marked his manner. "To him who is stout enough to follow the bent of his humor, all is easy. Do you know that the true secret of the philosopher is not in living forever, but in living while he can? He who dies at fifty, after his fill of pleasure, has had more of life than he who drags his feet through a century, bearing the burden of the world's caprices, and afraid to speak above his breath, lest, forsooth, his neighbor should find that his words were evil."

"And yet there are some who find their greatest pleasure in pursuing the practices of virtue?"

"'Tis lovely in your sex to say it," he answered, with an air that the sensitive governess fancied was gleaming with the growing licentiousness of a freebooter. She would now gladly have dismissed her visitor; but a certain flashing of the eye, and a manner that was becoming gay by a species of unnatural effort, admonished her of the danger of offending one who acknowledged no law but his own will. Assuming a tone and manner that were kind, while they upheld the dignity of her sex, and pointing to sundry instruments of music that formed part of the heterogeneous furniture of the cabin, she adroitly turned the discourse by saying—

"One whose mind can be softened by harmony, and whose feelings are so evidently alive to the influence of sweet sounds, should not decry the pleasures of innocence. This flute, and yon guitar, both call you master."

"And, finding these flimsy evidences about my person, you are willing to give me credit for the accomplishments you mention! Here is another mistake of miserable mortality! Seeming is the every-day robe of honesty. Why not give me credit for kneeling, morning and night, before that glittering bawble?" pointing to the diamond crucifix, which hung, as usual, near the door of his own apartment.

"I hope, at least, that the Being whose memory is intended to be revived by that image, is not without your homage. In the pride of his strength and prosperity, man may think lightly of the consolations that can flow from a power superior to humanity; but those who have oftenest proved their value, feel deepest the reverence which is their due."

The look of the governess was averted; but, profoundly filled with the feeling she expressed, her reflecting eye turned to him again, as she uttered the simple sentiment. The gaze she met was earnest and thoughtful as her own. Lifting a finger, he laid it on her arm, with a motion so light as to be scarcely perceptible, while he asked—

"Think you we are to blame, if our temperaments incline more to evil than power is given to resist?"

"It is only those who attempt to walk the path of life alone that stumble. I shall not offend your manhood, if I ask, do you never commune with God?"

"It is long since that name has been

heard in this vessel, lady, except to aid in that miserable scoffing and profanity which simpler language made too dull. But what is He, that unknown Deity, more than what man in his ingenuity has seen fit to make Him?"

"'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,'" she answered, in a voice so firm that it startled even the ears of one so long accustomed to the turbulence and grandeur of his wild profession. "'Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me, where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.'"

The Rover gazed wildly on the flushed countenance of the speaker. Bending his face aside, he said aloud, rather giving utterance to his thoughts than pursuing the discourse—

"There is nothing more in this than what I have often heard, and yet it comes over my feelings with the freshness of native air! Lady, repeat thy words; change not a syllable, nor vary the slightest intonation of the voice, I pray thee."

Though much amazed, and even alarmed at the request, Mrs. Wyllys complied; delivering the holy language of the inspired writers with a fervor that found its support in the strength of her own faith.

Her auditor listened like a being enthralled. For nearly a minute, neither eye nor attitude was changed, but he stood at the feet of her who had so simply and so powerfully asserted the majesty of God, motionless as the mast against which he leaned. It was long after her accents had ceased, that he drew a deep respiration, and again spoke.

"This is retreading the whole path of life at a single stride," he said. "I know not why my pulses, which in common are like iron, beat so irregularly now. Lady, this little hand of thine might check a temper that has so often braved——"

He ceased; for his eye following his own hand, which had unconsciously touched that of Mrs. Wyllys, was fastened on the member he had named, which he appeared to study as if examining a relic. Drawing a sigh like one who awakened from an agreeable illusion, he turned away leaving the sentence unfinished.

"You would have music!" he recklessly exclaimed. "Then music there shall be, though its symphony be rung upon a gong!"

As he spoke, the wayward and vacillating being we have been attempting to describe struck the instrument so quick and powerfully as to drown all reply in the din. Though deeply mortified that he had so quickly escaped from the influence she had partially acquired, and secretly displeased at the unceremonious manner in which he had seen fit to announce his independence again, the governess was aware of the necessity of concealing her disappointment.

"This is certainly not the harmony I invited," she said, when the overwhelming sounds had ceased to fill the ship, "nor do I think it of a quality to favor the slumbers of those who are less dangerous in their hammocks than when awake."

"Fear nothing for them. The seaman will sleep soundly with his ear near the port at which the cannon bellows, and he awakes at the call of the boatswain's whistle. He is too deeply schooled in habit to think he has heard more than a note of the flute; stronger and fuller than common, if you will, but still a sound that has no interest for him. Another tap would have sounded the alarm of fire; these three touches say no more than music. It was the signal for the band. The night is still, and favorable for their art, and we will listen to sweet sounds awhile."

His words were scarcely uttered before the low chords of wind instruments were heard without, where the men had probably stationed themselves by some previous order of their captain. The Rover smiled, as if he exulted in this prompt proof of the sort of despotic, or rather magical, power he wielded; and, throwing his form on the divan, he sat listening to the sounds which followed.

The strains which now rose upon the night, and which spread themselves soft and melodiously abroad upon the water, would have done credit to more regular

artists. The air was wild and melancholy, and, perhaps, it was the more in accordance with the present humor of the man for whose ear it was created. Then, losing the former character, the whole power of the music was concentrated in softer and still gentler sounds, as if the genius who had given birth to the melody were pouring out the feelings of his soul in pathos. The temper of the Rover's mind answered to the changing expression of the music; and, when the strains were sweetest and most touching, he bowed his head like one who wept.

Though secretly under the influence of the harmony themselves, Mrs. Wyllys and her pupil could but gaze on the singularly-contrasted being into whose hands they had been cast by their evil fortune. The former was filled with admiration at the fearful contrariety of passions which could reveal themselves in the same individual, under so very different and so dangerous forms; while the latter, judging with the indulgence of her years, was willing to believe that a man whose emotions could be thus easily and kindly excited, was rather the victim of circumstances than the creator of his own habits.

"There is Italy in those strains," said the Rover, when the last chord died upon his ear; "sweet, indolent, luxurious, forgetful Italy! It has never been your chance, madam, to visit that land, so mighty in its recollections, and so impotent in its actual condition?"

The governess made no reply; but, bowing her head, in turn, her companions believed she was submitting also to the influence of the music. At length, impelled by another changeful impulse, the Rover advanced toward Gertrude; and addressing her with a courtesy that would have done credit to a different scene, he said—

"One who in common speaks music should not have neglected the gifts of nature. You sing?"

Had Gertrude possessed the power he affected to believe, her voice would have denied its services at his call. Bending to his compliment, she murmured her apologies in words that were barely audible. He listened intently; but, without pressing the point that it was easy to see was unwelcome, he turned away, and gave the gong a light quick tap.

"Roderick," he continued, when the light footsteps of the lad were heard upon the stairs that led into the cabin below, "do you sleep?"

The answer was low and smothered; of course it was in the negative.

"Apollo was not absent at the birth of Roderick, madam. The lad can raise such sounds as have been known to melt the stubborn feeling of a seaman. Go, place yourself by the cabin door, good Roderick, and bid the music run a low accompaniment to your words."

The boy obeyed, stationing his slight form so much in shadow that his countenance was not visible to those who sat within the stronger light of the lamp.

The instruments then commenced a gentle symphony, which soon ended; and twice did they begin the air, but no voice was heard.

"Words, Roderick, words; we are but dull interpreters of the meaning of the flutes."

The boy then began in a full, rich, contralto voice, which betrayed a tremor, however, that threatened more than once to interrupt the song. The words, so far as they might be distinguished, ran as follows:

"The land was lying broad and fair
Behind the western sea;
And holy solitude was there,
And sweetest liberty.

"The ling'ring sun, at evening, hung
A glorious orb, divinely beaming
On silent lake and tree;
And ruddy light was o'er all streaming.
Mark, man! for thee;
O'er valley, lake and tree!

"And now a thousand maidens stray,
Or range the echoing groves;
While fluttering near, on pinions gay
Fan twice ten thousand loves.
In that soft clime, at even time,
Hope says——"

"Enough of this, good Roderick," impatiently interrupted his master. "There

is too much of the Corydon in that song for the humor of a mariner. Sing us of the sea and its pleasures, boy; and roll out the strains in a fashion that will suit a sailor's fancy."

The lad was mute, perhaps in disinclination to the task, perhaps from inability to comply.

"What, Roderick! does the muse desert thee? or is thy memory getting dull? You see the child is willful in his melody; he must sing of loves and sunshine or he fails. Now touch us a stronger chord, my men, and put life into your cadences, while I troll a sea air for the honor of the ship."

The band caught the humor of their master (for he well deserved the name), sounding a powerful and graceful symphony to prepare the listeners for the song of the Rover. Those treacherous and beguiling tones which so often stole into his voice when speaking, did not mislead expectation as to its powers. It proved to be equally rich, full, deep, and melodious. Favored by these natural advantages, and aided by an exquisite ear, he rolled out the following stanzas, in a manner that was singularly divided between that of the reveler and the man of sentiment. The words were probably original, for they smacked strongly of his own profession, and were not entirely without a touch of the peculiar taste of the individual.

"All hands, unmoor! unmoor!
Hark to the hoarse, but welcome sound,
Startling the seaman's sweetest slumbers,
The groaning capstan's laboring round,
The cheerful fife's enlivening numbers;
And ling'ring idlers join the brawl,
And merry ship-boys swell the call,
All hands, unmoor! unmoor!

"The cry's 'A sail! a sail!'
Brace high each nerve to dare the fight
And boldly steer to seek a foeman;
One secret prayer to aid the right,
And many a secret thought to woman!
Now spread the flutt'ring canvas wide,
And dash the foaming sea aside;
The cry's 'A sail! a sail!'

"Three cheers for victory!
Hushed be each plaint o'er fallen brave;
Still every sigh to messmate given;
The seaman's tomb is in the wave;
The hero's latest hope is heaven!
High lift the voice in revelry!
Gay raise the song, the shout, the glee;
Three cheers for victory!"

When he had ended the song, and without waiting to listen if any words of compliment were to succeed an effort that might lay claim to great excellence both in tones and execution, he arose; and desiring his guests to command the services of his band at pleasure, he wished them, "soft repose and pleasant dreams," and coolly descended into the lower apartments, apparently for the night. Mrs. Wyllys and Gertrude, notwithstanding they had been amused, or rather seduced, by the interest thrown around a manner that was so wayward, while it was never gross, felt a sensation as he disappeared like that produced by breathing a freer air, after having been too long compelled to respire the pent atmosphere of a dungeon. The former regarded her pupil with eyes in which open affection struggled with inward solicitude; but neither spoke, since a slight movement near the door of the cabin reminded them that they were not yet alone.

"Would you have further music, madam?" asked Roderick, stealing timidly out of the shadow as he spoke; "I will sing you to sleep, if you will; but I am choked when he bids me to be merry against my feelings."

The brow of the governess contracted, and she was evidently preparing herself to give a stern and repulsive answer; but the plaintive tones, and shrinking, submissive form of the other, pleaded so strongly to her heart that the frown passed away, leaving in its place the reproving look which chastens the frown of maternal concern.

"Roderick," she said, "I thought we should have seen thee no more to-night!"

"You heard the gong. Although he can be so gay, and can raise such thrilling sounds in his pleasanter moments, you have never yet listened to him in anger."

"Is his anger so very fearful?"

"Perhaps to me it is more frightful than to others; but I find nothing so terrible as a word of his, when his mind is moody."

"Is he then harsh to thee?"

"Never."

"You contradict yourself, Roderick.

He is, and he is not. Have you not said how terrible you find his moody language?"

"Yes, for I find it changed. Once he was never thoughtful or out of humor, but latterly he is not himself."

Mrs. Wyllys did not answer. The language of the boy was certainly much more intelligible to her than to her attentive but unsuspecting companion; for, while she motioned to the lad to retire, Gertrude manifested a desire to gratify the curious interest she felt in the life and manners of the freebooter. The signal, however, was authoritatively repeated, and the lad slowly and with reluctance withdrew.

The governess and her pupil then retired into their own state-room; and after devoting many minutes to those nightly offerings and petitions which neither ever suffered any circumstances to cause them to neglect, they slept in the consciousness of innocence, and in the hope of an all-powerful protection. Though the bell of the ship regularly sounded the hour throughout the watches of the night, scarcely another sound arose, during the darkness, to disturb the calm which seemed to have settled equally on the ocean and all that floated on its bosom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"But, for the miracle,
I mean our preservation, few in millions
Can speak like us."—TEMPEST.

DURING these moments of treacherous calm, the *Dolphin* might have been likened to a slumbering beast of prey. But as Nature limits the period of repose to the creatures of the animal world, so it would seem that the inactivity of the freebooters was not doomed to any long continuance. With the morning sun a breeze came across the water, breathing the flavor of the land, and setting the sluggish ship again in motion. Throughout all that day, with a wide reach of canvas spreading along her booms, her course was held toward the south. Watch succeeded watch, and night came after day, and still no change was made in her direction. Then the blue islands were seen heaving up, one after another, out of the sea. The prisoners of the Rover, for thus the females were now constrained to consider themselves, silently watched each hillock of green that the vessel glided past, each naked and sandy key, or each mountain-side, until, by the calculations of the governess, they were already steering amid the western Archipelago.

During all this time no question was asked which in the smallest manner betrayed to the Rover the consciousness of his guests, that he was not conducting them toward the promised port of the continent. Gertrude wept for the sorrow of her father, but her tears flowed in private, or were poured upon the bosom of her governess. Wilder she avoided, with an intuitive consciousness that he was no longer the character she had wished to believe; but to all in the ship she struggled to maintain an equal air and a serene eye.

In this deportment, safer than any impotent entreaties might have proved, she was strongly supported by her governess, whose knowledge of mankind had early taught her that virtue was never so imposing as when it knew best how to maintain its equanimity. On the other hand, both the commander of the ship and his lieutenant sought no other communication with the inmates of the cabin than courtesy appeared absolutely to require.

The former, as if repenting already of having laid so bare the capricious humors of his mind, withdrew gradually into himself, neither seeking nor permitting familiarity with any; while the latter appeared perfectly conscious of the constrained mien of the governess, and of the altered though still pitying eye of her pupil. Little explanation was necessary to acquaint Wilder with the reasons of this change. Instead of seeking the means to vindicate his character, however, he rather imitated their reserve. Little else was wanting to assure his former friends of the nature of his pursuits; for even Mrs. Wyllys admitted to her charge that he acted like one in whom depravity had not yet made such progress as to have

destroyed that consciousness which is ever the surest test of innocence.

We shall not detain the narrative to dwell upon the natural regrets in which Gertrude indulged, as this sad conviction forced itself upon her understanding, nor to relate the gentle wishes in which she did not think it wrong to indulge, that one who certainly was master of so many manly and generous qualities, might be made to see the error of his life, and to return to a course for which even her cold and nicely judging governess allowed nature had eminently endowed him. Perhaps the kind emotions that had been awakened in her bosom by the events of the last fortnight were not content to exhibit themselves in wishes alone; and that petitions more personal, and even more fervent than common, mingled in her prayers; but this is a veil which it is not our province to raise, the heart of one so pure and ingenuous being the best repository for its own gentle feelings.

For several days the ship had been contending with the unvarying winds of those regions. Instead of struggling, however, like a cumbered trader, to gain some given port, the Rover suddenly altered her course, gliding through one of the many passages that intersect the islands, with the ease of a bird that is settling to its nest. A hundred different sails were seen, but all were avoided alike; the policy of the freebooters teaching them the necessity of moderation, in a sea so crowded with vessels of war. After the vessel had shot through one of the straits which divide the chain of the Antilles, it issued in safety on the more open sea which separates them from the Spanish Main. The moment the passage was effected, and a broad and clear horizon was seen stretching on every side of them, a manifest alteration occurred in the mien of every individual of the crew. The brow of the Rover himself lost the look of care which had wrapped the whole man in a mantle of reserve, and his reserve disappeared, leaving him the reckless, wayward being we have described. Even the men, whose vigilance had needed no quickening in running the gauntlet of the cruisers which were known to swarm in the narrower seas, appeared to breathe a freer air, and sounds of merriment and thoughtless gayety were once more heard in a place over which the gloom of distrust had been so long and so heavily cast.

On the other hand, the governess saw new ground for uneasiness in the course the vessel was taking. While the islands were in view, she had hoped that their captor only awaited a suitable occasion to place them in safety within the influence of the laws of some of the colonial governments. Her own observation told her there was so much of what was once good, if not noble, mingled with the lawlessness of the two principal individuals in the vessel, that she saw nothing that was visionary in such an expectation. Even the tales of the time, which recounted the desperate acts of the freebooter, with wild and fanciful exaggerations, did not forget to include numberless instances of even chivalrous generosity. In short, he bore the character of one who, while he declared himself the enemy of all, knew how to distinguish between the weak and the strong, and who often found as much gratification in repairing the wrongs of the former as in humbling the pride of the latter.

But all her agreeable anticipations from this quarter were forgotten when the last island of the group sank into the sea behind them, and the ship lay alone on an empty ocean. As if ready to throw aside his mask, the Rover ordered the sails to be reduced; and, neglecting the favorable breeze, the vessel was brought to the wind. No object calling for the immediate attention of her crew, the *Dolphin* came to a stand, in the midst of the waters, her officers and people abandoning themselves to their pleasures, or to idleness, as whim or inclination dictated.

"I had hoped that your convenience would have permitted us to land in some of his Majesty's islands," said Mrs. Wyllys, speaking for the first time since her suspicions had been awakened on the subject of her quitting the ship, and addressing her words to the self-styled Captain Heidegger, just after the order to heave-to the

vessel had been obeyed. "I fear you find it irksome to be so long dispossessed of your cabin."

"It cannot be better occupied," he rather evasively replied; though the observant and anxious governess fancied his eye was bolder, and his air under less restraint, than when she had before dwelt on the same topic. "If custom did not require that a ship should wear the colors of some people, mine should always sport those of the fair."

"And, as it is——"

"As it is, I hoist the emblems that belong to the service I am in."

"In fifteen days, that you have been troubled with my presence, it has never been my good fortune to see those colors set."

"No!" exclaimed the Rover, glancing at her, as if to penetrate her thoughts. "Then shall the uncertainty cease on the sixteenth. Who's there, abaft?"

"No one better nor worse than Richard Fid," returned the individual in question, lifting his head from a locker into which it had been thrust, while its owner searched for some mislaid implement, and who added a little quickly, when he ascertained by whom he was addressed, "Always at your honor's orders."

"Ah! 'tis the friend of *our* friend," the Rover observed to Mrs. Wyllys, with an emphasis which the other understood. "He shall be my interpreter. Come, hither, lad; I have a word to exchange with you."

"A thousand at your service, sir," returned Richard, complying; "for, though no great talker, I have always something uppermost in my mind which can be laid hold of at need."

"I hope you find that your hammock swings easily in my ship?"

"I'll not deny it, your honor; an easier craft, especially upon a bowline, might be hard to find."

"And the cruise. I hope you also find the cruise such as a seaman loves?"

"D'ye see, sir, I was sent from home with little schooling, and so I seldom make so free as to pretend to read the Captain's orders."

"But still you have your inclinations," said Mrs. Wyllys, firmly, determined to push the investigation even farther than her companion had intended.

"I can't say that I am wanting in natural feeling, your ladyship," returned Fid, endeavoring to manifest his admiration of the sex by the awkward bow he made to the governess as its representative, "tho' crosses and mishaps have come thwart me as well as better men. I thought as strong a splice was laid between me and Kate Whiffle as was ever turned into a sheet cable; but then came the law, with its regulations and shipping articles, luffing short athwart my happiness, and making a wreck at once of all the poor girl's hopes, and giving but a Flemish account of my comfort."

"It was proved that she had another husband!" dryly remarked the Rover.

"Four, your honor. The girl had a love for company, and it grieved her to the heart to see an empty house; but then, as it was seldom more than one of us could be in port at a time, there was no such need to make the noise they did about the trifle. But envy did it all, sir; envy, and the greediness of the landsharks. Had every woman in the parish as many husbands as Kate, the devil a bit would they have taken up the precious time of judge and jury in looking into the manner in which a wench like her kept a quiet household."

"And since that unfortunate repulse, you have kept yourself altogether out of the bands of matrimony?"

"Aye, aye; *since*, your honor," returned Fid, giving his commander another of those droll looks, in which a peculiar cunning struggled with a more direct and straight-going honesty, "*since*, as you say rightly, sir; though they talked of a small matter of a bargain that I had made with another woman, myself; but, in overhauling the affair, they found that, as the shipping articles with poor Kate wouldn't hold together, why, they could make nothing at all of me; so I was whitewashed like a queen's parlor, and sent adrift."

"And all this occurred after your acquaintance with Mr. Wilder?"

"Afore, your honor, afore. I was but a younker in the time of it, seeing that it is four-and-twenty years, come May next, since I have been towing at the stern of Master Harry. But then, as I have had a sort of family of my own since that day, why, the less need, you know, to be berthing myself again in any other man's hammock."

"You were saying it is four-and-twenty years," interrupted Mrs. Wyllys, "since you made the acquaintance of Mr. Wilder?"

"Acquaintance! Lord, my lady, little did he know of acquaintances at that time; though, bless him! the lad has had occasion to remember it often enough since."

"The meeting of two men of so singular merit must have been somewhat remarkable?" observed the Rover.

"It was for that matter remarkable enough, your honor; though, as to the merit, notwithstanding Master Harry is often for overhauling that part of the account, I've set it down for just nothing at all."

"I confess that, in a case where two men, both of whom are so well qualified to judge, are of different opinions, I feel at a loss to know which can have the right. Perhaps, by the aid of the facts, I might form a truer judgment."

"Your honor forgets the Guinea, who is altogether of my mind in the matter, seeing no great merit in the thing either. But, as you are saying, sir, reading the log is the only true way to know how fast a ship can go; and so, if this lady and your honor have a mind to come at the truth of the affair, why, you have only to say as much, and I will put it all before you in creditable language."

"There is reason in this proposition," returned the Rover, motioning to his companion to follow to a part of the poop where they were less exposed to the observations of inquisitive eyes. "Now place the whole clearly before us; and then you may consider the merits of the question disposed of definitely."

Fid was far from discovering the smallest reluctance to enter on the required detail; and, by the time he had cleared his throat, freshened his supply of the weed, and otherwise disposed himself to proceed, Mrs. Wyllys had so far conquered her reluctance to pry clandestinely into the secrets of others, as to yield to a curiosity she found unconquerable, and to take the seat to which her companion invited her by a gesture of his hand.

"I was sent early to sea, your honor, by my father," commenced Fid, after these little preliminaries had been observed, "who was, like myself, a man that passed more of his time on the water than on dry ground; though, as he was nothing more than a fisherman, he generally kept the land aboard; which is, after all, little better than living on it altogether. Howsomever, when I went, I made a broad offing at once, fetching up on the other side of the Horn, the very first passage I made, which was no small journey for a new beginner; but, then, as I was only eight years old——"

"Eight! you are speaking of yourself," interrupted the disappointed governess.

"Certain, madam; and, though genteeler people might be talked of, it would be hard to turn the conversation on any man who knows better how to rig or how to strip a ship. I was beginning at the right end of my story; but, as I fancied your ladyship might not choose to waste time in hearing concerning my father and mother, I cut the matter short by striking in at eight years, overlooking all about my birth, and name, and other matters as are usually logged in your every-day narratives."

"Proceed," she rejoined, resorting to a compelled resignation.

"My mind is pretty much like a ship that is about to slip off its ways," resumed Fid. "If she makes a fair start, and there is neither jam nor dry-rub, smack she goes into the water, like a sail let run in a calm; but, if she once brings up, a good deal of labor is to be gone through to set her in motion again. Now, in order to wedge up my ideas, and to get the story slushed, so that I can slip through it with ease, it is needful to over-

run the part which I have just let go; which is how my father was a fisherman, and how I doubled the Horn. Ah! here I have it again, clear of kinks, fake about fake, like a well coiled cable; so that I can pay it out as easily as the boatswain's yeoman can lay his hand on a bite of ratline-stuff. Well, I doubled the Horn, as I was saying, and might have been the matter of four years cruising about among the islands and seas of those parts, which were none of the best known then, or, for that matter, now. After this, I served in his Majesty's fleet a whole war, and got three wounds, and as much honor as I could stow beneath hatches. Well, then, I fell in with the Guinea—the black, my lady, that you see turning in a new clew-garnet-block for the starboard clew of the fore-course."

"Aye; then you fell in with the African," said the Rover.

"Then we made our acquaintance; and although his color is no whiter than the back of a whale, I care not who knows it, after Master Harry, there is no man living who has an honester way with him, or in whose company I take greater satisfaction. To be sure, your honor, the fellow is sometimes contradictory, and has a great opinion of his strength, and thinks his equal is not to be found at a weather-earing, or in the bunt of a top-sail; but then he is no better than a black, and one is not to be too particular in looking into the faults of such as are not actually his fellow-creatures."

"That would be uncharitable in the extreme."

"The very words the chaplain used to let fly aboard the *Brunswick!* It is a great thing to have schooling, your honor; since, if it does nothing else, it fits a man for a boatswain, and puts him on the track of steering the shortest course to heaven. But, as I was saying, there was I and Guinea shipmates, and in a reasonable way friends, for five years more; and then the time arrived when we met with the mishap of the wreck in the West Indies."

"What wreck?"

"I beg your honor's pardon; I never swing my headyards till I'm sure the ship won't luff back into the wind; and before I tell the particulars of the wreck, I will overrun my ideas, and see that nothing is forgotten that should of right be first mentioned."

The Rover, who saw by the expression of her countenance how impatient his companion was becoming for a sequel that approached so tardily, and how much she dreaded an interruption, made a significant sign to her to permit the straight-going tar to take his own course, as the best means of coming at the fact they both longed so much to hear. Left to himself, Fid soon took the necessary review of the transactions, in his own quaint manner; and having happily found that nothing which he considered as germane to the narrative was omitted, he proceeded at once to the more material, and what was to his auditors by far the most interesting part of his narrative.

"Well, as I was telling your honor," he continued, "Guinea was then a main-top man, and I was stationed in the same place aboard the *Proserpine*, a quick-going two-and-thirty, when we fell in with a bit of a smuggler, between the islands and the Spanish Main; and so the captain made a prize of her, and ordered her into port; for which I have always supposed, as he was a sensible man, he had his orders. But this is neither here nor there, seeing that the craft had got to the end of her rope, and foundered in a heavy hurricane that came over us, mayhap a couple of days' run to leeward of our haven. Well, she was a small boat; and, as she took it into her mind to roll over on her side before she went to sleep, the master's mate in charge, and three others, slid off her decks to the bottom of the sea, as I have always had reason to believe, never having heard anything of them since. It was here that Guinea served me with the good turn; for, though we had often before shared hunger and thirst together, this was the first time he ever jumped overboard to keep me from taking salt water like a fish."

"He kept you from drowning with the rest?"

"I'll not say just that much, your honor; for there is no knowing what lucky accident might have done the same good turn for me. Howsomever, seeing that I can swim no better nor worse than a double-headed shot, I have always been willing to give the black credit for so much, though little has ever been said between us on the subject; for no other reason, as I can see, than that settling-day has not yet come. Well, we contrived to get the boat afloat, and enough into it to keep body and soul together, and made the best of our way to the land, seeing that the cruise was, to all useful purposes, over in that smuggler. I needn't be particular in telling this lady of the nature of boat-duty, as she has lately had some experience in that way herself; but I can tell her this much; had it not been for that boat in which the black and myself spent the better part of ten days, she would have fared but badly in her own navigation."

"Explain your meaning."

"My meaning is plain enough, your honor, which is, that little else than the handy way of Master Harry in a boat could have kept the Bristol trader's launch above water the day we fell in with it."

"But in what manner was your own shipwreck concerned with the safety of Mr. Wilder?" demanded the governess, unable any longer to wait the dilatory explanation of the prolix seaman.

"In a very plain and natural fashion, my lady, as you will say yourself, when you come to hear the pitiful part of my tale. Well, there were I and Guinea rowing about in the ocean, on short allowance of all things but work, for two nights and a day, heading in for the islands; for, though no great navigators, we could smell the land, and so we pulled away lustily: for you consider it was a race in which life was the wager, until we made, in the pride of the morning, as it might be here at east-and-by-south, a ship under bare poles; if a vessel can be called bare that has nothing better than the stumps of her three masts standing, and they without rope or rag to tell one her rig or nation. Howsomever, as there were three naked sticks left, I have always put her down for a full-rigged ship; and when we got nigh enough to take a look at her hull, I made bold to say she was of English build."

"You boarded her?" observed the Rover.

"A small task that, your honor, since a starved dog was the whole crew she could muster to keep us off. It was a solemn sight when we got on decks, and one that bears hard on my manhood," continued Fid, with an air that grew more serious as he proceeded, "whenever I have occasion to overhaul the log-book of memory."

"You found her people suffering of want?"

"We found a noble ship as helpless as a halibut in a tub. There she lay, a craft of some four hundred tons, water-logged and motionless as a church. It always gives me great reflection, sir, when I see a noble vessel brought to such a strait; for one may liken her to a man who has been docked of his fins, and who is getting to be good for little else than to be set upon a cat-head to look out for squalls."

"The ship was then deserted?"

"Aye, the people had left her, sir, or had been washed away in that gust that had laid her over. I never could come at the truth of the particulars. The dog had been mischievous, I concluded, about the decks; and so he had been lashed to a timber-head, the which saved his life, since, happily for him, he found himself on the weatherside when the hull righted a little, after her spars gave way. Well, sir, there was the dog, and not much else as we could see, though we spent half a day in rummaging round, in order to pick up any small matter that might be useful; but then, as the entrances to the hold and cabin were full of water, why, we made no great affair for the salvage after all."

"And then you left the wreck?"

"Not yet, your honor. While knocking about among the bits of rigging and lumber above board, says Guinea, says he, 'Mister Dick, I hear some one making their plaints below.' Now, I had heard the same noises myself, sir; but had set them down as the spirits of the people

moaning over their losses, and had said nothing of the same for fear of stirring up the superstition of the black; for the best of them are no better than superstitious niggers, my lady; so I said nothing of what I had heard, until he saw fit to broach the subject himself. Then we both turned-to to listening with a will, and sure enough the groans began to take a human sound. It was a good while, howsomever, before I could make up whether it was anything more than the complaining of the hulk itself; for you know, my lady, that a ship which is about to sink makes her lamentations just like any other living thing."

"I do, I do," returned the governess, shuddering; "I have heard them, and never will memory lose the recollection of the sounds!"

"Aye, I thought you might know something of the same, and solemn groans they are; but as the hulk kept rolling on the top of the sea, and no farther signs of her going down, I began to think it best to cut into her abaft, in order to make sure that some miserable wretch had not been caught in his hammock at the time she went over. Well, good will and an ax soon let us into the secret of the moans."

"You found a child?"

"And its mother, my lady. As good luck would have it, they were in a berth on the weather-side, and as yet the water had not reached them; but pent air and hunger had nearly proved as bad as the brine. The lady was in the agony when we got her out; and as to the boy, proud and strong as you now see him there on yonder gun, my lady, he was just so miserable, that it was no small matter to make him swallow the drop of wine and water that the Lord had left us, in order, as I have often thought since, to bring him up to be, as he at this moment is, the pride of the ocean!"

"But the mother?"

"The mother had given the only morsel of biscuit she had to the child, and was dying in order that the urchin might live. I never could get rightly into the meaning of the thing, my lady, why a woman, who is no better than a Lascar in matters of strength, nor any better than a booby in respect of courage, should be able to let go her hold of life in this quiet fashion, when many a stout mariner would be fighting for each mouthful of air the Lord might see fit to give. But there she was, white as the sail on which the storm has long beaten, and limber as a pennant in a calm, with her poor skinny arm around the lad, holding in her hand the very mouthful that might have kept her own soul in the body a little longer."

"What did she, when you brought her to the light?"

"What did she!" repeated Fid, whose voice was getting thick and husky; "why she did a d——d honest thing; she gave the boy the crumb, and motioned, as well as a dying woman could motion, that she would have an eye over him till the cruise of life was up."

"And was that all?"

"I have always thought she prayed; for something passed between her and one who was not to be seen, if a man might judge by the fashion in which her eyes were turned aloft, and her lips moved. I hope, among others, she put in a good word for Richard Fid; for certain she had as little need to be asking for herself as anybody. But no man will ever know what she said, seeing that her mouth was shut from that time forever after."

"She died?"

"I am sorry to say it. But the poor lady was past swallowing when she came into our hands, and then it was but little we had to offer her. A quart of water, with, mayhap, a gill of wine, a biscuit, and a handful of rice, was no great allowance for two hearty men to pull a boat some seventy leagues within the tropics. Howsomever, when we found no more was to be got from the wreck, and that, since the air had escaped by the hole we had cut, she was settling fast, we thought it best to get out of her; and sure enough we were none too soon, seeing that she went under just as we had twitched the jolly-boat clear of the suction."

"And the boy—the deserted child!" exclaimed the governess, whose eyes had now filled to overflowing.

"There you are all aback, my lady. Instead of deserting him, we brought him away with us, as we did the only other living creature to be found about the wreck. But we still had a long journey before us, and, to make the matter worse, we were out of the track of the traders. So I put it down as a case for a council of all hands, which was no more than I and the black, since the lad was too weak to talk, and little could he have said otherwise in our situation. So I began myself, saying, says I, 'Guinea, we must either eat this here dog, or this here boy. If we eat the boy, we shall be no better than the people in your own country,' who, you know, my lady, are cannibals, 'but if we eat the dog, poor as he is, we may make out to keep soul and body together, and to give the child the other matters.' So Guinea, he says, says he, 'I've no occasion for food at all; give 'em to the boy,' says he, 'seeing that he is little and has need of strength.' Howsomever, Master Harry took no great fancy to the dog, which we soon finished between us, for the plain reason that he was so thin. After that, we had a hungry time of it ourselves; for, had we not kept up life in the lad, you know, there was so little of it that it would soon have slipped through our fingers."

"And you fed the child, though fasting yourselves?"

"No, we weren't altogether idle, my lady, seeing that we kept our teeth jogging on the skin of the dog, though I will not say that the food was over savory; and then, as we had no occasion to lose time in eating, we kept the oars going so much the livelier. Well, we got in at one of the islands after a time, though neither I nor the nigger had much to boast of as to strength or weight when we made the first kitchen we fell in with."

"And the child?"

"O! he was doing well enough; for as the doctors afterward told us, the short allowance on which he was put did him no harm."

"You sought his friends?"

"Why, as for that matter, my lady, so far as I have been able to discover, he was with his best friends already. We had neither chart nor bearings by which we knew how to steer in search of his family. His name he called Master Harry, by which it is clear he was a gentleman born, as indeed any one may see by looking at him; but not another word could I learn of his relations or country, except that, as he spoke the English language and was found in an English ship, there is a natural reason to believe he is of English build himself."

"Dld you learn the name of the ship?" demanded the attentive Rover, in whose countenance the traces of a lively interest were very distinctly discernible.

"Why, as to that matter, your honor, schools were scarce in any part of the country; and in Africa, you know, there is no great matter of learning; so that, had her name been out of water, which it was not, we might have been bothered to read it. Howsomever, there was a horse-bucket kicking about her decks, and which, as luck would have it, got jammed in with the pumps in such a fashion that it did not go overboard until we took it with us. Well, this bucket had a name painted on it; and, after we had leisure for the thing, I got Guinea, who has a natural turn at tattooing, to rub it into my arm in gunpowder, as the handiest way of logging these small particulars. Your honor shall see what the black has made of it."

So saying, Fid very coolly doffed his jacket, and laid bare to the elbow one of his brawny arms, on which the blue impression was still very plainly visible. Although the letters were rudely imitated, it was not difficult to read, in the skin, the words, "*Ark*, of Lynnhaven."

"Here, then, you had a clew at once to find the relatives of the boy," observed the Rover, after he had deciphered the letters.

"It seems not, your honor; for we took the child with us aboard the *Proserpine*, and our worthy captain carried sail hard after the people; but no one could give any tidings of such a craft as the '*Ark*, of Lynnhaven;' and, after a twelvemonth, or more, we were obliged to give up the chase."

"Could the child give no account of his friends?" demanded the governess.

"But little, my lady; for the reason that he knew but little about himself. So we gave the matter over altogether; I and Guinea, and the captain, and all of us, turning-to to educate the boy. He got his seamanship of the black and myself, and mayhap some little of his manners also; and his navigation and Latin of the captain, who proved his friend till such a time as he was able to take care of himself, and, for that matter, some years afterward."

"And how long did Mr. Wilder continue in a king's ship?" asked the Rover, in a careless and apparently an indifferent manner.

"Long enough to learn all that is taught there, your honor," was the evasive reply.

"He came to be an officer, I suppose?"

"If he didn't the King had the worst of the bargain. But what is this I see here-away, atween the backstay and the vang? It looks like a sail! or is it only a gull flapping his wings before he rises?"

"Sail ho!" called the lookout from the mast-head. "Sail, ho!" was echoed from top and deck; the glittering, though distant object having struck a dozen vigilant eyes at the same instant. The Rover was compelled to lend his attention to a summons so often repeated; and Fid profited by the circumstance to quit the poop, with the hurry of one who was not sorry for the interruption.

Then the governess arose, too, and, thoughtful and melancholy, she sought the privacy of her cabin.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Their preparation is to-day by sea."
—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

"SAIL, HO!" in the little frequented sea in which the *Rover* lay, was a cry that quickened every pulsation in the bosoms of her crew. Many weeks had now, according to their method of calculation, been entirely lost in the visionary and profitless plans of their chief. They were not of a temper to reason on the fatality which had forced the Bristol trader from their toils; it was enough, for their rough natures, that the rich spoil had escaped them. Without examining into the causes of this loss, they were disposed to visit their disappointment on the head of the innocent officer who had been charged with the care of a vessel that they already considered a prize. Here, then, was at length an opportunity to repair their loss. The stranger was about to encounter them in a part of the ocean where succor was nearly hopeless, and where time might be afforded to profit to the utmost, by any success that the freebooters should obtain. Every man in the ship seemed sensible of these advantages; and, as the words sounded from mast to yard, and from yard to deck, they were taken up in cheerful echoes from fifty mouths, which repeated the cry until it was heard issuing from the inmost recesses of the vessel.

The Rover himself manifested unusual satisfaction at this new prospect of a capture. He was quite aware of the necessity of some brilliant or of some profitable exploit, to curb the rising tempers of his men; and long experience had taught him that he could draw the cords of discipline the tightest in moments that appeared the most to require the exercise of his own high courage and consummate skill.

He walked forward, therefore, among his people, with a countenance that was no longer buried in reserve, speaking to several, whom he addressed by name, and of whom he did not even disdain to ask opinions concerning the character of the distant sail. When a sort of implied assurance that their recent offenses were overlooked had thus been given, he summoned Wilder, the General, and one or two others of the superior officers, to the poop, where they all disposed themselves to more particular and more certain observations, by the aid of a half-dozen excellent glasses.

Many minutes were now passed in intense scrutiny. The day was cloudless, and the wind fresh without being heavy, the sea long, even, and far from high, and,

in short, all things combined, as far as is ever seen on the restless ocean, not only to aid their examination, but to favor those subsequent evolutions which each instant rendered more probable would become necessary.

"It is a ship!" said the Rover, lowering his glass, the first to proclaim the result of the long inspection.

"It is a ship!" echoed the General, across whose weather-worn features a ray of something like satisfaction was making an effort to shine.

"A full-rigged ship!" continued a third, relieving his eye in turn, and answering the grim smile of the soldier.

"There must be something to hold up all those lofty spars," resumed the commander. "A hull of price is beneath. But you say nothing, Mr. Wilder! You make her out——"

"A ship of size," returned our adventurer, who, though silent, had been far from the least interested in his investigations. "Does my glass deceive me—or——"

"Or what, sir?"

"I see her to the head of her courses."

"You see her as I do. It is a tall ship, on an easy bowline, with everything set that will draw. And she is standing hitherward. Her lower sails have lifted within five minutes."

"I thought as much. But——"

"But what, sir? There can be little doubt but she is heading north-and-by-east. Since she is so kind as to spare us the pains of the chase, we will not hurry our movements. Let her come on. How like you the manner of the stranger's advance, General?"

"Unmilitary, but enticing! There is a look of the mines about her very royals."

"And you, gentlemen, do you also see the fashion of a galleon in her upper sails?"

"'Tis not unreasonable to believe it," answered one of the inferiors. "The Dons are said to run this passage often in order to escape speaking to us gentlemen who sail with roving commissions."

"Ah, your Don is a prince of the earth! There is charity in lightening his golden burden, or the man would sink under it, as did the Roman matron under the pressure of the Sabine shields. I think, by your eye, you see no such gilded beauty in the stranger, Mr. Wilder?"

"It is a heavy ship!"

"The more likely to bear a noble freight. You are new, sir, to this merry trade of ours, or you would know that size is a quality we greatly esteem. If they carry pennants, we leave them to meditate on the many 'slips which exist between the cup and the lip;' if stored with metal no more dangerous than that of Potosi, they generally sail the faster after passing a few hours in our company."

"Is not the stranger making signals?" demanded Wilder, quickly.

"Is he so alert? A good look-out must be had, when a vessel, that is merely steadied by her stay-sails, can be seen so far. Vigilance is a never-failing sign of value!"

There was a pause, during which all the glasses, in imitation of Wilder's, were raised in the direction of the stranger. Different opinions were given; some affirming and some doubting the fact of the signals. The Rover himself was silent, though his observation was keen and long continued.

"We have wearied our eyes till sight is getting dim," he said. "I have the use of trying fresh organs when my own have refused to serve me. Come hither, lad," he continued, addressing a man who was executing some delicate job in seamanship on the poop, at no great distance from the spot where the group of officers had placed themselves; "come hither; tell me what you make of the sail in the southwestern board."

The man proved to be Scipio, who had been chosen, for his expertness, to perform the task in question. Placing his cap on the deck, in a reverence even deeper than that which the seaman usually manifests toward his superior, he lifted the glass in one hand, while with the other he covered the eye for which at that moment he had no particular use. No sooner did the wandering instrument fall on the distant ob-

ject, than he dropped it again, and fastened his look in a sort of stupid admiration on Wilder.

"Did you see the sail?" demanded the Rover.

"Masser can see him wid he naked eye."

"Aye, but what do you make of him with the glass?"

"He'm a ship, sir."

"True. On what course?"

"He got he starboard tacks aboard, sir."

"Still true. Has he signals aboard?"

"He'm got t'ree new cloths in he main-top-gallant royal, sir."

"His vessel is all the better for the repairs. Did you see his flags?"

"He'm show no flag, masser."

"I thought as much myself. Go forward, lad—stay—one often gets a true idea by seeking it where it is not thought to exist. Of what size do you take the stranger to be?"

"He'm just seven hundred and fifty tons, masser."

"How's this! The tongue of your negro, Mr. Wilder, is as exact as a carpenter's rule. The fellow speaks of the size of a vessel that is hull down, with an air as authoritative as a runner of the King's customs could pronounce of the same after she had been submitted to the office admeasurement."

"You will have consideration for the ignorance of the black; men of his unfortunate race are seldom skillful in answering interrogatories."

"Ignorance!" repeated the Rover, glancing his eye uneasily, and with a rapidity peculiar to himself, from one to the other, and from both to the rising object in the horizon; "skillful! I know not; the man has no air of doubt. You think her tonnage precisely that which you have said?"

The large dark eyes of Scipio rolled, in turn, from his new commander to his ancient master, while for a moment his faculties appeared to be lost in confusion. But the uncertainty continued only for a moment. He no sooner read the frown that was gathering on the brow of the latter, than the air of confidence with which he had pronounced his former opinion vanished in a look of obstinacy so settled that one might well have despaired of ever driving or enticing him again to seem to think.

"I ask you, if the stranger may not be a dozen tons larger or smaller than what you have just named?" continued the Rover, when he found his former question was not likely to be soon answered.

"He'm just as masser wish 'em," returned Scipio.

"I wish him a thousand; he will then prove the richer prize."

"I s'pose he'm quite a t'ousand, sir."

"Or a snug ship of three hundred, if lined with gold, might do."

"He look berry just like t'ree hundred."

"To me it seems a brig."

"I t'ink him a brig, too, masser."

"Or possibly, after all, the stranger may prove a schooner, with many lofty and light sails."

"A schooner often carry a royal," returned the black, resolute to acquiesce in all the other said.

"Who knows it is a sail at all! Forward there! It may be well to have more opinions than one on so weighty a matter. Forward there! send the foretop-man that is called Fid upon the poop. Your companions are so intelligent and so faithful, Mr. Wilder, that you are not to be surprised if I show an undue desire for their opinions."

Wilder compressed his lips, and the rest of the group manifested a good deal of amazement; but the latter had been too long accustomed to the caprice of their commander, and the former was too wise to speak at a moment when his humor seemed at the highest. The topman, however, was not long in making his appearance, and then the chief saw fit to pursue his purpose.

"And you think it questionable whether it be a sail at all?" he continued.

"He'm sartain nothing but a fly-away," returned the obstinate black.

"You hear what your friend the negro says, Master Fid; he thinks that yonder

object, which is lifting so fast to leeward, is not a sail."

As the top-man saw no sufficient reason for concealing his astonishment at this wild opinion, it was manifested with all the embellishments with which the individual in question usually delivered his sentiments. After casting a short glance in the direction of the sail, in order to assure himself there had been no deception, he turned his eyes in great disgust on Scipio, to vindicate the credit of the association at the expense of some little contempt for the ignorance of his companion.

"What the devil do you take it for, Guinea?—a church?"

"I t'ink he'm church, too," responded the acquiescent black.

"Lord help the dark-skinned fool. Your honor knows that conscience is d—nably overlooked in Africa, and will not judge the nigger hardly for any little blunder he may make on account of religion. But the fellow is a thorough seaman, and should know a top-gallant-sail from a weather-cock. Now, look you, S'ip, for the credit of your friends, if you've no great pride on your own behalf, just tell his——"

"It is of no account," interrupted the Rover; "take the glass yourself, and pass an opinion on the sail in sight."

Fid scraped his foot, made a low bow, in acknowledgment of the compliment, and then, depositing his little tarpaulin on the deck of the poop, he very composedly, and, as he flattered himself, very understandingly, disposed of his person to take the desired view. The gaze of the topman was far longer than that of his black companion; and it is to be presumed, in consequence, much more accurate. Instead, however, of venturing any sudden opinion, when his eye was wearied, he lowered the glass, and with it his head, standing now in the attitude of one whose thoughts had received some subject for deep cogitation. During the process of thinking, the weed was diligently rolled over his tongue, and one hand stuck akimbo into his side, as if he would brace all his faculties to support some extraordinary mental effort.

"I wait your opinion," resumed his attentive commander, when he thought sufficient time had been allowed to mature the opinion even of Richard Fid.

"Will your honor just tell me what day of the month this here may be, and mayhap, at the same time, the day of the week too, if it shouldn't be giving too much trouble?"

His two questions were answered.

"We had the wind at east-with-southing the first day out, and then it chopped in the night, and blew great guns at north-west, where it held for the matter of a week. After which there was an Irishman's hurricane, right up and down, for a day; then we got into these trades, which have stood as steady as a ship's chaplain over a punch-bowl, ever since."

Here the topman closed his soliloquy, in order to agitate the tobacco again, it being impossible to conduct the process of chewing and talking at one and the same time.

"What of the stranger?" demanded the Rover a little impatiently.

"It's no church, that's certain, your honor," said Fid, very decidedly.

"Has he signals flying?"

"He may be speaking with his flags, but it needs a better scholar than Richard Fid to know what he would say. To my eye there are three new cloths in his main-top-galiant-royal,* but no bunting abroad."

"The man is happy in having so good a sail. Mr. Wilder, do *you*, too, see the cloths in question?"

"There is certainly something which might be taken for new canvas. I believe I first mistook it, as the sun fell brightest on the sail, for the signals I named."

"Then we are not seen, and may lie quiet for awhile, though we enjoy the advantage of measuring the stranger, foot by foot—even to the new cloths in his royal!"

* It has been objected to this term, that the sail is called the main-royal. The writer is old enough to remember when seamen always inserted the other word, when they wished to speak with a "full mouth." Main-sail, main-top-sail, main-top-gallant-royal, were, and indeed are still, the proper appellations of these sails. "Main-royal" is, beyond dispute, the familiar name now most in use.

The Rover spoke in a manner that was strangely divided between sarcasm and suspicion. He made an impatient gesture to the seamen to quit the poop. When they were alone, he turned to his silent and respectful officers, continuing, in a manner that was grave while it was conciliatory.

"Gentlemen," he said, "our idle time is past, and fortune has at length brought us active service. Whether the ship in sight be of just seven hundred and fifty tons is more than I can pretend to pronounce, but something there is which any seaman may know. By the squareness of her upper-yards, the symmetry with which they are trimmed, and the press of canvas she bears on the wind, I pronounce her to be a vessel of war. Do any differ from my opinion? Mr. Wilder, speak!"

"I feel the truth of all your reasons, and think with you."

The shade of distrust which had gathered over the brow of the Rover during the foregoing scene lighted a little as he listened to the direct and frank avowal of his lieutenant.

"You believe she bears a pennant? I like this manliness of reply. Then comes another question: Shall we fight her?"

To this interrogatory it was not easy to give a decisive answer. Each officer consulted the opinions of his comrades in their eyes, until their leader saw fit to make his application still more personal.

"Now, General, this is a question peculiarly fitted for your wisdon," he resumed. "Shall we give battle to the pennant? or shall we spread our wings and fly?"

"My bullies are not drilled to the retreat. Give them any other work to do, and I will answer for their steadiness."

"But shall we adventure, without a reason?"

"The Spaniard often sends his bullion home under cover of a cruiser's guns," observed one of the inferiors, who rarely found pleasure in any risk that did not infer its correspondent benefit. "We may feel the stranger; if he carries more than his guns, he will betray it in his reluctance to speak; if poor, we shall find him fierce as a half-fed tiger."

"There is sense in your counsel, Brace, and it shall be regarded. Go then, gentlemen, to your several duties. We'll occupy the half-hour that must pass, before his hull shall rise, in looking to our gear, and overhauling the guns. As it is not decided to fight, let what is done be done without display. The people must see no receding from a resolution that is once taken."

They separated, each man preparing to undertake the task that more especially belonged to the situation he filled in the ship. Wilder was retiring with the rest, when a sign kept him on the poop along with his new confederate.

"The monotony of our lives is now likely to be interrupted, Mr. Wilder," commenced the former, first glancing his eye around to make sure they were alone. "I have seen enough of your spirit and steadiness to be sure that, should accident disable me to conduct the fortunes of these people, my authority will fall into firm and able hands."

"Should such a calamity befall us, I hope it will be found that your expectations are not to be deceived."

"I have confidence, sir; and, where a brave man reposes his confidence, he has a right to hope it will not be abused. Do I speak in reason?"

"I acknowledge the justice of what you say."

"I would, Wilder, that we had known each other earlier. But what matter vain regrets? These fellows of yours are keen of sight to note those new cloths so soon!"

"'Tis just the observation of people of their class. The nicer distinctions which marked the cruiser came first from yourself."

"And then the 'seven hundred and fifty tons' of the black. It was giving an opinion to a foot!"

"It is the quality of ignorance to be positive."

"Very true. Cast an eye at the stranger, and tell me how he comes on."

Wilder obeyed, glad to be relieved from a discourse that he found embarrassing. Many moments were passed before he dropped the glass, during which time not

a syllable fell from the lips of his companion. When he turned, however, to deliver the result of his observations, he met an eye that seemed to pierce his soul fastened on his countenance. Coloring highly, as if he resented the suspicion betrayed by the act, Wilder closed his half-open lips and continued silent.

"And the ship?" deeply demanded the Rover.

"The ship has already raised her courses; in a few more minutes we shall see the hull."

"It is a swift vessel! She is standing directly for us."

"I think not. Her head is lying more to the eastward."

"It may be well to make certain of that fact. You are right," he continued, after taking a look himself at the approaching cloud of canvas; "you are very right. As yet we are not seen. Forward there! haul down that head stay-sail; we will steady the ship by her yards. Now let him look with all his eyes; they must be good to see these naked spars at such a distance."

Our adventurer made no reply, assenting to the truth of what the other had said by a simple inclination of his head. They then resumed the walk to and fro in their narrow limits, neither manifesting, however, any disposition to renew the discourse.

"We are in good condition for the alternative of flight or combat," the Rover at length observed, while he cast a rapid look over the preparations which had been unostentatiously in progress from the moment when the officers dispersed. "Now will I confess, Wilder, a secret pleasure in the belief that yonder audacious fool carries the boasted commission of the German who wears the crown of Britain. Should he prove more than man dare attempt, I will flout him, though prudence shall check any further attempts, and should he prove an equal, would it not gladden your eyes to see St. George come dropping to the water?"

"I thought that men in our pursuit left honor to silly heads, and that we seldom struck a blow that was not intended to ring on a metal more precious than iron."

"'Tis the character the world gives us; but I, for one, would rather lower the pride of the minions of King George, than possess the power of unlocking his treasury! Said I well, General?" he added, as the individual he named approached; "said I well in asserting there was glorious pleasure in making a pennant trail upon the sea?"

"We fight for victory," returned the martinet. "I am ready to engage at a minute's notice."

"Prompt and decided as a soldier. Now tell me, General, if Fortune, or Chance, or Providence, whichever of the powers you acknowledge for a leader, were to give you the option of enjoyments, in what would you find your deepest satisfaction?"

The soldier seemed to ruminate.

"I have often thought that, were I commander of things on earth, I should, backed by a dozen of my stoutest bullies, charge at the door of that cave which was entered by the tailor's boy, him they call Aladdin."

"The genuine aspirations of a freebooter! In such a case, the magic trees would soon be disburdened of their fruit. Still it might prove an inglorious victory, since incantations and charms are the weapons of the combatants. Call you honor nothing?"

"Hum! I fought for honor half of a reasonably long life, and found myself as light at the close of all my dangers as at the beginning. Honor and I have shaken hands, unless it be the honor of coming off conqueror. I have a strong disgust of defeat, but am always ready to sell the mere honor of the victory cheap."

"Well, let it pass. The quality of the service is much the same, find the motives where you will. How now! who has dared to let yonder top-gallant-sail fly?"

The startling change in the voice of the Rover caused all within hearing of his words to tremble. Deep, anxious, and threatening displeasure was in its tones; and each man cast his eyes upward, to see on whose devoted head the weight of the

dreadful indignation of their chief was likely to fall. Fid was standing on the head of that topmast which belonged to the particular portion of the vessel where he was stationed, and the sail in question was fluttering, with all its gear loosened, fair and high in the wind. His hearing had probably been drowned by the heavy flapping of the canvas; for, instead of lending his ears to the powerful call just mentioned, he rather stood contemplating his work, than exhibiting any anxiety as to the effect it might produce on the minds of those beneath him. But a second warning came in tones too terrible to be any longer disregarded by ears even as dull as those of the offender.

"By whose orders have you dared to loosen the sail?" demanded the Rover.

"By the order of King Wind, your honor. The best seaman must give in, when a squall gets the upper hand."

"Furl it! away loft, and furl it!" shouted the excited leader. "Roll it up; and send the fellow down who has been so bold as to own any authority but my own in this ship, though it were that of a hurricane."

A dozen nimble topmen ascended to the assistance of Fid. In another minute the unruly canvas was secured, and Richard himself was on his way to the poop. During this brief interval the brow of the Rover was dark and angry as the surface of the element on which he lived, when blackened by a tempest. Wilder, who had never before seen his new commander thus excited, began to tremble for the fate of his old comrade, and drew nigher as the latter approached, to intercede in his favor, should the circumstances seem to require such an interposition.

"And why is this?" the still stern and angry captain demanded of the offender. "Why is it that you, whom I have had such recent reason to applaud, would dare to let fall a sail at a moment when it is important to keep the ship naked?"

"Your honor will admit that his rations sometimes slips through the best man's fingers, and why not a bit of canvas?" deliberately returned the delinquent. "If I took a turn too many of the gasket off the yard, it is a fault I am ready to answer for."

"You say true, and dearly shall you pay the forfeit. Take him to the gangway, and let him make the acquaintance with the cat."

"No new acquaintance, your honor, seeing that we have met before, and that, too, for matters which I had reason to hide my head for; whereas here, it may be many blows and little shame."

"May I intercede in behalf of the offender?" interrupted Wilder, with earnestness and haste. "He is often blundering, but rarely would he err, had he as much knowledge as good-will."

"Say nothing about it, Master Harry," returned the topman, with a peculiar glance of the eye. "The sail has been flying finely, and it is now too late to deny it; and so, I suppose, the fact must be scored on the back of Richard Fid, as you would put any other misfortune into the log."

"I would he might be pardoned. I can venture to promise, in his name, 'twill be the last offense——"

"Let it be forgotten," returned the Rover, struggling to conquer his passion. "I will not disturb our harmony at such a moment, Mr. Wilder, by refusing so small a boon; but you need not be told to what evil such negligence might lead. Give me the glass again; I will see if the fluttering canvas has escaped the eye of the stranger."

The topman bestowed a stolen but exulting glance on Wilder, when the latter motioned the other hastily away, turning himself to join his commander in the examination.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"As I am an honest man, he looks pale.
Art thou sick or angry?"
—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THE approach of the strange sail was becoming rapidly more and more visible to the naked eye. The little speck of white, which had first been seen on the margin of the sea, resembling some gull floating on the summit of a wave, had

gradually arisen during the last half-hour, until a tall pyramid of canvas was reared on the water. As Wilder bent his look again on this growing object, the Rover put a glass into his hand, with an expression which the other understood to say, "You may perceive that the carelessness of your dependent has betrayed us!" Still, the look was one rather of regret than of reproach; nor did a single syllable of the tongue confirm the language of the eye. On the contrary, it would seem that his commander was anxious to preserve their recent amicable compact inviolate; for, when the young mariner attempted an awkward explanation of the probable causes of the blunder of Fid, he was met by a quiet gesture, which said, in a sufficiently intelligible language, that the offense was pardoned.

"Our neighbor keeps a good lookout, as you may see," observed the other. "He has tacked, and is laying boldly up across our fore-foot. Well, let him come on; we shall soon get a look at his battery, and then we may form our conclusion as to the nature of the intercourse we are to hold."

"If you permit the stranger to near us, it might be difficult to throw him off the chase, should we be glad to get rid of him."

"It must be a fast-going vessel, to which the *Dolphin* cannot spare a top-gallant-sail."

"I know not, sir. The sail in sight is swift on the wind, and it is to be believed that she is no duller off. I have rarely known a vessel rise so rapidly as she has done since we first made her."

The youth spoke with such earnestness as to draw the attention of his companion from the object he was studying to the countenance of the speaker.

"Mr. Wilder," he said, quickly, with an air of decision, "you know the ship!"

"I'll not deny it. If my opinion be true, she will be found too heavy for the *Dolphin*, and a vessel that offers little inducement for us to attempt to carry."

"Her size?"

"You heard it from the black."

"Your followers know her also?"

"It would be difficult to deceive a topman in, the cut and trim of sails, among which he has passed months—nay, years."

"Ha! I understand the 'new cloths' in her top-gallant-royal! Mr. Wilder, your departure from that vessel has been recent?"

"As my arrival in this."

The Rover continued silent for several minutes. His companion made no offer to disturb his meditations; though the furtive glances he often cast in the direction of the other betrayed some little anxiety for the result of his own frank avowal.

"And her guns?" his commander at length abruptly demanded.

"She numbers four more than the *Dolphin*."

"The metal?"

"Is still heavier. In every particular she is a ship a size above your own."

"Doubtless she is the property of the King?"

"She is."

"She shall change masters. By Heaven, she shall be mine!"

Wilder shook his head, answering only with an incredulous smile.

"You doubt it. Come hither and look upon the deck. Can he, whom you so lately quitted, muster fellows like these?"

The crew of the *Dolphin* had been chosen by one who thoroughly understood the character of a seaman, from among all the different people of the Christian world. There was not a maritime nation in Europe which had not its representative among that band of turbulent and desperate spirits. Even the descendant of the aboriginal possessors of America had been made to abandon the habits and opinions of his progenitors, to become a wanderer on that element which had laved the shores of his native land for ages, without exciting a wish to penetrate its mysteries in the bosoms of his simple-minded ancestry. All had been fitted, by lives of wild adventure on the two elements, for their present lawless pursuits; and, directed by the mind which had known how to obtain and to continue its

despotic ascendency over their efforts, they truly formed a most dangerous and (considering their numbers) a resistless crew. Their commander smiled in exultation, as he watched the evident reflection with which his companion contemplated the indifference, or fierce joy, which different individuals among them exhibited at the appearance of an approaching conflict. Even the rawest of their numbers, the luckless waisters and after-guard, were as confident of victory as those whose audacity might plead the apology of uniform and often repeated success.

"Count you these for nothing?" asked the Rover, at the elbow of the lieutenant, after allowing him time to embrace the whole of the grim band with his eye. "See! here is a Dane; ponderous and steady as the gun at which I shall shortly place him. You may cut him limb from limb, and yet he will stand like a tower, until the last stone of the foundation has been sapped. And here we have his neighbors, the Swede and the Russ, fit companions for managing the same piece; which, I'll answer, shall not be silent while a man of them all is left to apply a match, or handle a sponge. Yonder is a square-built, athletic mariner, from one of the free towns. He prefers our liberty to that of his native city; and you shall find that the venerable Hanseatic institutions shall give way sooner than he be known to quit the spot I give him to defend. Here you see a brace of Englishmen; and, though they came from the island that I love so little, better men at need will not be often found. Feed them and flog them, and I pledge myself to their swaggering and their courage. D'ye see that thoughtful-looking bony miscreant that has a look of godliness in the midst of his villiany. That fellow fished for herring until he got a taste of beef, when his stomach revolted at its ancient fare; and then the ambition of becoming rich got uppermost. He is a Scot, from one of the lochs of the North."

"Will he fight?"

"For money—the honor of the Macs—and his religion. He is a reasoning fellow, after all; and I like to have him on my own side in a quarrel. Ah! yonder is the boy for a charge. I once told him to cut a rope in a hurry, and he severed it above his head instead of beneath his feet, taking a flight from a lower yard into the sea, as a reward for the exploit. But, then, he always extols his presence of mind in not drowning! Now are his ideas in a hot ferment; and, if the truth could be known, I would wager a handsome venture that the sail in sight is, by some mysterious process, magnified to six in his fertile fancy."

"He must be thinking, then, of escape?"

"Far from it; he is rather plotting the means of surrounding them with the *Dolphin*. To your true Hibernian, escape is the last idea that gives him an uneasy moment. You see that positive-looking, sallow mortal, at his elbow. That is a man who will fight with a sort of sentiment. There is a touch of chivalry in him which might be worked into heroism, if one had but the opportunity and the inclination. As it is, he will not fail to show a spark of the true Castilian. His companion has come from the Rock of Lisbon; I should trust him unwillingly, did I not know that little opportunity of taking pay from the enemy is given here. Ah! here is a lad for a dance of a Sunday. You see him at this moment, with foot and tongue going together. That is a creature of contradictions. He wants for neither wit nor good-nature, but still he might cut your throat on an occasion. There is a strange medley of ferocity and *bonhommie* about the animal. I should put him among the boarders; for we shall not be at blows a minute before his impatience will be for carrying everything by a *coup-de-main*."

"And who is the seaman at his elbow, that apparently is occupied in divesting his person of some superfluous garments?" demanded Wilder, irresistibly attracted by the manner of the Rover to pursue the subject.

"An economical Dutchman. He calculates that it is just as wise to be killed in an old jacket as in a new one; and has probably said as much to his Gascon

neighbor, who is, however, resolved to die decently, if die he must. The former has happily commenced his preparations for the combat in good season, or the enemy might defeat us before he would be in readiness. Did it rest between these two worthies to decide this quarrel, the mercurial Frenchman would defeat his neighbor of Holland before the latter had believed the battle had commenced; but should he let the happy moment pass, rely on it, the Dutchman would give him trouble. Forget you, Wilder, that the day has been when the countrymen of that slow-moving and heavy-molded fellow swept the narrow seas with a broom at her mast-heads?"

The Rover smiled wildly as he spoke, and what he said he uttered bitterly. To his companion, however, there appeared no such grounds of unnatural exultation in recalling the success of a foreign enemy, and he was content to assent the truth of the historical fact with a simple inclination of his head. As if he even found pain in this tacit confession, and would gladly be rid of the mortifying reflection altogether, he rejoined, in some apparent haste:

"You have overlooked the two tall seamen, who are making out the rig of the stranger with so much gravity of observation."

"Aye, those are men that came from a land in which we both feel some interest. The sea is not more unstable than are those rogues in their knavery. Their minds are but half made up to piracy. 'Tis a coarse word, Mr. Wilder, but I fear we earn it. But these rascals make a reservation of grace in the midst of all their villainy."

"They regard the stranger as if they saw reason to distrust the wisdom of letting him approach so near."

"Ah! they are renowned calculators. I fear they have detected the four supernumerary guns you mentioned; for their vision seems supernatural in affairs which touch their interests. But you see there is brawn and sinew in the fellows; and, what is better, there are heads which teach them to turn those advantages to account."

"You think they fail in spirit?"

"Hum! It might be dangerous to try it on any point they deem material. They are no quarrelers about words, and seldom lose sight of certain musty maxims, which they pretend come from a volume that I fear you and I do not study too intently. It is not often that they strike a blow for mere chivalry; and, were they so inclined, the rogues are too much disposed to logic, to mistake, like your black, the *Dolphin* for a church. Still, if they see reason, in their puissant judgments, to engage, mark me, the two guns they command will do better service than all the rest of the battery. Should they think otherwise, it would occasion no surprise were I to receive a proposition to spare the powder for some more profitable adventure. Honor, forsooth! the miscreants are too well practiced in polemics to mistake the point of honor in a pursuit like ours. But we chatter of trifles, when it is time to think of serious things. Mr. Wilder, we will now show our canvas."

The manner of the Rover changed as suddenly as his language. Losing the air of sarcastic levity, in which he had been indulging, in a mien better suited to maintain the authority he wielded, he walked aside, while his subordinate proceeded to issue the orders necessary to enforce his commands. Nightingale sounded the usual summons, lifting his hoarse voice in the cry of "All hands make sail, ahoy!"

Until now, the people of the *Dolphin* had made their observations on the sail that was growing so rapidly above the waters, according to their several humors. Some had exulted in the prospect of a capture; others, more practiced in the ways of their commander, had deemed the probability of their coming in collision at all with the stranger a point far from settled; while a few, more accustomed to reflection, shook their heads as the stranger drew nigher, as if they believed he was already within a distance that might be attended with too much hazard. Still, as they were ignorant alike of those secret sources of information which the chief had

so frequently proved he possessed, to an extent that often seemed miraculous, the whole were content patiently to await his decision. But, when the cry above mentioned was heard, it was answered by an activity so general and so cheerful, as to prove it was entirely welcome. Order now followed order from the mouth of Wilder in quick succession, he being in virtue of his station the proper executive officer for the moment.

As both lieutenant and crew appeared animated by the same spirit, it was not long before the naked spars of the *Dolphin* were clothed in vast volumes of snow-white canvas. Sail had fallen after sail, and yard after yard had been raised to the summit of its mast, until the vessel bowed before the breeze, rolling to and fro, but still held stationary by the position of her yards. When all was in readiness to proceed, on whichever course might be deemed necessary, Wilder ascended again to the poop, in order to announce the fact to his superior. He found the Rover attentively considering the stranger, whose hull had by this time risen out of the sea, exhibiting a long, dotted, yellow line, which the eye of every man in the ship well knew to contain the ports where the guns that marked her particular force were to be sought. Mrs. Wyllys, accompanied by Gertrude, stood nigh, thoughtful as usual, but permitting no occurrence of the slightest moment to escape her vigilance.

"We are ready to gather way on the ship," said Wilder; "we wait merely for the course."

The Rover started, and drew closer to his subordinate. Looking him fully and intently in the eye, he said—

"You are certain that you know that vessel, Mr. Wilder?"

"Certain."

"It is a royal cruiser," said the governess with the swiftness of thought.

"It is, I have already pronounced her to be so."

"Mr. Wilder," resumed the Rover, "we will try her speed. Let the courses fall, and fill your forward sails."

The young mariner made an acknowledgment of obedience, and proceeded with alacrity to execute the wishes of his commander. There was an eagerness and perhaps a trepidation in the voice of Wilder, as he issued the necessary orders, that was in remarkable contrast to the deep-toned calmness which characterized the utterance of the Rover. The unusual intonations did not entirely escape the ears of some of the elder seamen; and looks of peculiar meaning were exchanged among them, as they paused to catch his words. But obedience followed these unwonted sounds, as it had been accustomed to succeed the more imposing utterances of their long-dreaded chief. The head-yards were swung, the sails were distended with the breeze, and the mass which had so long been inert began to divide the waters, as it heavily overcame the state of rest in which it had reposed. The ship soon attained its velocity; and then the contest between the two rival vessels became of engrossing interest.

By this time the stranger was within a half league, directly under the lee of the *Dolphin*. Closer and more accurate observation had satisfied every eye in the latter ship of the force and character of their neighbor. The rays of a bright sun fell clear upon her broadside, while the shadow of her sails was thrown across the waters in a direction opposite to their own. There were moments when the eye, aided by the glass, could penetrate through the open ports into the interior of the hull, catching fleeting and delusory glimpses of the movements within. A few human forms were distinctly visible in different parts of her rigging; but, in all other respects, the repose of high order and perfect discipline was discernible in all about her.

When the Rover heard the sounds of the parted waters, and saw the little jets of spray that the bows of his own gallant ship cast before her, he signed to his lieutenant to ascend to the place which he still occupied on the poop. For many minutes his eye was on the strange sail, in close and intelligent contemplation of her powers.

"Mr. Wilder," he at length said, speak-

ing like one whose doubts on some perplexing point were finally removed, "I have seen that cruiser before."

"It is probable; she has roamed over most of the waters of the Atlantic."

"Aye, this is not the first of our meetings! A little paint has changed her exterior, but I think I know the manner in which they have stepped her masts."

"They are thought to rake more than usual."

"They are thought to do it with reason. Did you serve long aboard her?"

"Years."

"And you left her——"

"To join you."

"Tell me, Wilder, did they treat you, too, as one of an inferior order? Ha! was your merit called 'provincial?' Did they read America in all you did?"

"I left her, Captain Heidegger."

"Aye, they gave you reason. For once they have done me an act of kindness. But you were in her during the equinox of March?"

Wilder made a slight bow of assent.

"I though as much. And you fought a stranger in a gale? Winds, ocean, and man, were all at work together."

"It is true. We knew you, and thought for a time that your hour had come."

"I like your frankness. We have sought each other's lives like men, and we shall prove the truer friends, now that amity is established between us. I will not ask you farther of that adventure, Wilder; for favor in my service is not to be bought by treachery to that you have quitted. It is sufficient that you now sail under my flag."

"What is that flag?" demanded a mild, firm voice at his elbow.

The Rover turned suddenly, and met the riveted, calm, and searching eye of the governess. The gleamings of some strangely contradictory passions crossed his features, and then his countenance changed to that look of bland courtesy which he most affected when addressing his captives.

"Here is a female reminding two old mariners of their duty!" he exclaimed. "We have forgotten the civility of showing the stranger our bunting. Let it be set, Mr. Wilder, that we omit none of the observances of nautical etiquette."

"The ship in sight carries a naked gaff."

"No matter; we shall be foremost in courtesy. Let the colors be shown."

Wilder opened the little locker which contained the flags most in use, but hesitated which to select, out of a dozen that lay in large rolls within the different compartments."

"I hardly know which of these ensigns it is your pleasure to show," he said, in a manner that appeared sufficiently like putting a question.

"Try him with the heavy-molded Dutchman. The commander of so noble a ship should understand all Christian tongues."

The lieutenant made a sign to the quartermaster on duty; and, in another minute, the flag of the United Provinces was waving at the peak of the *Dolphin*. The two officers narrowly watched its effect on the stranger, who refused, however, to make any answering sign to the false signal they had just exhibited.

"The stranger sees we have a hull that was never made for the shoals of Holland. Perhaps he knows us?" said the Rover, glancing at the same time a look of inquiry at his companion.

"I think not. Paint is too freely used in the *Dolphin* for even her friends to be certain of her countenance."

"She is a coquettish ship, we will allow. Try him with the Portuguese; let us see if Brazil diamonds have favor in his eyes."

The colors already set were lowered, and, in their place, the emblem of the house of Braganza was loosened to the breeze. Still the stranger pursued his course in sullen inattention, eating closer and closer into the wind, as it is termed in nautical language, in order to lessen the distance between him and his chase as much as possible.

"An ally cannot move him," said the Rover. "Now let him see the taunting *drapeau blanc*."

Wilder complied in silence. The flag of

Portugal was hauled to the deck, and the white field of France was given to the air. The ensign had hardly fluttered in its elevated position, before a broad, glossy blazonry rose, like some enormous bird taking wing, from the deck of the stranger, and opened its folds in graceful waves at his gaff. The same instant, a column of smoke issued from his bows, and had sailed backward through his rigging, ere the report of his gun of defiance found its way, against the fresh breeze of the trades, to the ears of the *Dolphin's* crew.

"So much for national amity!" dryly observed the Rover. "He is mute to the Dutchman, and to the crown of Braganza; but the very bile is stirred within him at the sight of a table-cloth! Let him contemplate the colors he loves so little, Mr. Wilder; when we are tired of showing them, our lockers will furnish another."

It would seem, however, that the sight of the flag which the *Rover* now chose to bear produced some such effect on his neighbor as the moleta of the nimble banderillo is known to excite in the enraged bull. Sundry small sails, which could do but little good, but which answered the purpose of appearing to wish to quicken his speed, were instantly set aboard the stranger; and not a brace, or a bowline was suffered to escape without an additional pull. In short, he wore the air of the courser who receives the useless blows of the jockey when already at the top of his speed, and when any farther excitement is as fruitless as his own additional exertions. Still there seemed but little use in these efforts. By this time, the two vessels were fairly trying their powers of sailing, and with no visible advantage in favor of either. Although the *Dolphin* was renowned for her speed, the stranger manifested no inferiority that the keenest scrutiny might detect. The ship of the freebooter was already bending to the breeze, and jets of spray before her were cast still higher and farther in advance; but each impulse of the wind was equally felt by the stranger, and her movement over the heaving waters seemed to be as rapid and as graceful as that of her rival.

"Yonder ship parts the water as a swallow cuts the air," observed the chief of the freebooters to the youth, who still kept at his elbow, endeavoring to conceal an uneasiness which was increasing at each instant. "Has she a name for speed?"

"The curlew is scarcely faster. Are we not already nigh enough for men who cruise with commissions no better than our own pleasure?"

The Rover glanced a look of impatient suspicion at the countenance of his companion; but its expression changed to a smile of haughty audacity as he answered—

"Let him equal the eagle in his highest and swiftest flight, he shall find us no laggard on the wing! Why this reluctance to be within a mile of a vessel of the crown?"

"Because I know her force, and the hopeless character of a contest with an enemy so superior," returned Wilder, firmly. "Captain Heidegger, you cannot fight yonder ship with success; and, unless instant use be made of the distance which still exists between us, you cannot escape her. Indeed, I know not but it is already too late to attempt the latter."

"Such, sir, is the opinion of one who overrates the powers of his enemy, because use and much talking have taught him to reverence it as something more than human. Mr. Wilder, none are so daring, or so modest, as those who have long been accustomed to place their dependence on their own exertions. I have been nigher to a flag even, and yet you see I continue to keep on this mortal coil."

"Hark! 'Tis a drum. The stranger is going to his guns."

The Rover listened a moment, and was able to catch the well-known beat which calls the people of a vessel of war to their quarters. First casting a glance upward at his sails, and then throwing a general and critical look on all and everything which came within the influence of his command, he calmly answered—

"We will imitate his example, Mr. Wilder. Let the order be given."

Until now, the crew of the *Dolphin* had either been occupied in such necessary duties as precede an action, or were gazing at the strange ship. The low but continued hum of voices, sounds such as discipline permitted, had afforded the only evidence of the interest they took in the scene; but the instant the first tap on the drum was heard, each group severed, and every man repaired, with bustling activity, to his well-known station. The stir among the crew was but of a moment's continuance; it was succeeded by the breathing stillness which has already been noticed in our pages on a similar occasion. The officers, however, were seen making hasty, but strict, inquiries into the conditions of their several commands: while the munitions of war, that were drawn from their places of deposit, announced a preparation more serious than ordinary. The Rover himself had disappeared; but it was not long before he was again seen at his elevated lookout, accoutered for the conflict that appeared to approach, and employed, as ever, in studying the properties, the force and the evolutions of his advancing antagonist. Those who knew him best, however, said that the question of combat was not yet decided in his mind; and many eager glances were thrown in the direction of his eye, as if to penetrate the mystery in which he chose to conceal his purpose. He had thrown aside the sea-cap, and stood with his fair hair blowing about a brow that seemed formed to give birth to thoughts far nobler than those which apparently had occupied his life; while a species of leathern helmet lay at his feet, the garniture of which was of a nature to lend an unnatural fierceness to the countenance of its wearer. Whenever this boarding-cap was worn, all in the ship were given to understand that the moment of serious strife was at hand; but, as yet, that never-failing evidence of the hostile intention of their leader was unnoticed.

In the meantime, each officer had examined into and reported the state of his division; and then, by a sort of implied permission on the part of their superiors, the death-like calm, which had hitherto reigned among the people, was allowed to be broken by suppressed but earnest discourse: the calculating chief permitting this departure from the usual rules of more regular cruisers, in order to come at the temper of the crew, on which so much of the success of his desperate enterprises so frequently depended.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"For he made me mad,
To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman."
—KING HENRY IV.

THE moment was one of high and earnest excitement. Each individual charged with a portion of the subordinate authority of the ship had examined into the state of his command, with the care which always deepens as responsibility draws nigher to the proofs of having been worthily bestowed. The voice of the harsh master had ceased to inquire into the state of those several ropes and chains that were deemed vital to the safety of the vessel; each chief of a battery had assured and reassured himself that his artillery was ready for the most effective service; extra ammunition had already issued from its dark and secret repository; and even the hum of dialogue had ceased in the all-absorbing interest of the scene. Still the quick and ever-changing glance of the Rover could detect no reason to distrust the firmness of his people. They were grave, as are ever the bravest and steadiest in the hour of trial; but their gravity was mingled with no signs of concern. It seemed rather like the effect of desperate and concentrated resolution, such as braces the human mind to efforts which exceed the ordinary daring of martial enterprise. To this satisfactory exhibition of the humor of his crew, the wary and sagacious leader saw but three exceptions; they were found in the persons of his lieutenant and his two remarkable associates.

It has been seen that the bearing of Wilder was not altogether such as became one of his rank in a moment of great trial. The keen, jealous glances of the Rover

studied and restudied his manner, without arriving at any conclusion as to its cause. The color was as fresh on the cheeks of the youth, and his limbs were as firm, as in the hour of entire security; but the unsettled wandering of his eye, and an air of doubt and indecision which pervaded a mien that ought to display qualities so opposite, gave his commander concern. As if to find an explanation of the enigma in the deportment of the associates of Wilder, his look turned to the persons of Fid and the negro. They were both stationed at the piece nearest to the place he himself occupied, the former filling the station of captain of the gun.

The ribs of the ship itself were not firmer in their places than was the attitude of the topman, as he occasionally squinted along the massive iron tube over which he was placed in command; nor was that familiar and paternal care, which distinguishes the seaman's interest in his particular trust, wanting in his manner. Still, an air of broad and inexplicable surprise had possession of his rugged lineaments; and as his look wandered from the countenance of Wilder to their adversary, it was not difficult to discover that he marveled to find the two in opposition. He neither commented on, nor complained, however, of an occurrence he evidently found so extraordinary, but appeared perfectly disposed to pursue the spirit of that well-known maxim of the mariner, which teaches the obedient tar "to obey orders though he break owners." Every portion of the athletic form of the negro was motionless, except his eyes. These large, jet-black orbs, however, rolled incessantly, like the more dogmatic organs of the topman, from Wilder to the strange sail, seeming to drink in fresh draughts of astonishment at each new look.

Struck by these evident manifestations of some extraordinary and yet common sentiment between the two, the Rover profited by his own position, and the distance of the lieutenant to address them. Leaning over the slight rail that separated the break of the poop from the quarter-deck, he said in that familiar manner which the commander is most wont to use to his inferiors when their services are becoming of the greatest importance—

"I hope, Master Fid, they have put you at a gun to your liking?"

"There is not a smoother bore, or a wider mouth, in the ship, your honor, than these of 'Blazing Billy,'" returned the topman, giving the subject of his commendations an affectionate slap. "All I ask is a clean sponge and a tight wad. Guinea, score a foul anchor, in your own fashion, on a half-dozen of the shot; and, after the matter is over, they who live through it may go aboard the enemy, and see in what manner Richard Fid has planted his seed."

"You are not new in action, Master Fid?"

"Lord bless your honor! gunpowder is no more than dry tobacco in my nostrils! tho' if I say——"

"You were going to add——"

"That sometimes I find myself shifted over, in these here affairs," returned the topman, glancing his eyes first at the flag of France, and then at the distant emblem of England, "like a jib-boom rigged abaft, for a jury to the spanker. I suppose Master Harry has it all in his pocket, in black and white; but this much I will say, that if I must throw stones, I should rather see them break a neighbor's crockery, than that of my own mother. I say, Guinea, score a couple more of the shot; since, if the play is to be acted, I've a mind the 'Blazing Billy' should do something creditable for the honor of her good name."

The Rover drew back thoughtful and silent. He caught a look from Wilder, whom he again beckoned to approach.

"Mr. Wilder," he said in a tone of kindness, "I comprehend your feelings. All have not offended alike in yonder vessel, and you would rather your service against that haughty flag should commence with some other ship. There is little else but empty honor to be gained in the conflict—in tenderness to your feelings, I will avoid it."

"It is too late," said Wilder, with a melancholy shake of the head.

"You shall see your error. The experiment may cost us a broadside, but it shall succeed. Go, descend with your guests to a place of safety; by the time you return, the scene will have undergone a change."

Wilder eagerly disappeared in the cabin, whither Mrs. Wyllys had already withdrawn; and, after communicating the intentions of his commander to avoid an action, he conducted them into the depths of the vessel, in order that no casualty might arrive to embitter his recollections of the hour. This grateful duty promptly and solicitously performed, our adventurer again sought the deck with the velocity of thought.

Notwithstanding his absence had seemed but a moment, the scene had indeed changed in all its hostile images. In place of the flag of France, he found the ensign of England floating at the peak of the *Dolphin*, and a quick and intelligible exchange of signals in active operation between the two vessels. Of all that cloud of canvas which had so lately borne down the vessel of the Rover, her topsails alone remained distended to the yards; the remainder was hanging in festoons and fluttering loosely before a favorable breeze. The ship itself was running directly for the stranger, who, in turn, was sullenly securing her lofty sails, like one who was disappointed in a high prized and expected object.

"Now is yon fellow sorry to believe him a friend whom he had lately supposed an enemy," said the Rover, directing the attention of his lieutenant to the confiding manner with which their neighbor suffered himself to be deceived by his surreptitiously obtained signals. "It is a tempting offer, but I pass it, Wilder, for your sake."

The gaze of the lieutenant seemed bewildered, but he made no reply. Indeed, little time was given for deliberation or discourse. The *Dolphin* rolled swiftly along her briny path, and each moment dissipated the mist in which distance had enveloped the lesser objects on board the stranger. Guns, blocks, ropes, bolts, men, and even features became visible in rapid succession, as the water that divided them was parted by the bows of the lawless ship. In a few minutes the stranger, having secured most of her lighter canvas, came sweeping up the wind; and then, as his after-sails, squared for the purpose, took breeze on their outer surface, the mass of his hull became stationary.

The people of the *Dolphin* had so far imitated the confiding credulity of the deceived cruiser of the crown as to furl all their lofty duck, each man employed in the service trusting implicitly to the discretion and daring of the singular being whose pleasure it was to bring their ship into so hazardous a proximity to a powerful enemy—qualities that had been known to avail them in circumstances of even greater delicacy than those in which they were now placed. With this air of audacious confidence the dreaded *Rover* came gliding down upon her unsuspecting neighbor, until within a few hundred feet of her weather-beam, when she, too, with a graceful curve in her course, bore up against the breeze and came to a state of rest. But Wilder, who regarded all the movements of his superior in silent amazement, was not slow in observing that the head of the *Dolphin* was laid a different way from that of the other, and that her progress had been arrested by the counteracting position of her head-yards, a circumstance that afforded the advantage of a quicker command of the ship, should there be need to require a sudden recourse to the guns.

The *Dolphin* was still drifting slowly, under the influence of her recent motion, when the customary hoarse and nearly unintelligible summons came over the water, demanding her appellation and character. The Rover applied his trumpet to his lips, with a glance directed toward his lieutenant, and returned the name of a ship in the service of the King, that was known to be of the size and force of his own vessel.

"Aye, aye," returned a voice from the other ship, "'twas so I made out your signals."

The hail was then reciprocated, and the

name of the royal cruiser given in return, followed by an invitation from her commander to visit his superior.

Thus far, no more had occurred than was usual between seamen in the same service; but the affair was rapidly arriving at a point that most men would have found too embarrassing for further deception. Still, the observant eye of Wilder detected no hesitation or doubt in the manner of his chief. The beat of the drum was heard from the cruiser, announcing the "retreat from quarters;" and, with perfect composure, he directed the same signal to be given for his own people to retire from their guns. In short, five minutes established every appearance of entire confidence and amity between two vessels which would have soon been at deadly strife had the true character of one been known to the other. In this state of the doubtful game he played, and with the invitation still ringing in the ears of Wilder, the Rover motioned his lieutenant to his side.

"You hear that I am desired to visit my senior in the service of his Majesty," he said, smiling ironically. "Is it your pleasure to be of the party?"

The start with which Wilder received this hardy proposal was too far natural to proceed from any counterfeited emotion.

"You are not so mad as to run the risk!" he exclaimed, when words were at command.

"If you fear for yourself, I can go alone."

"Fear!" echoed the youth, a bright flush giving an additional glow to the flashing of his kindling eyes. "It is not fear, Captain Heidegger, but prudence, that tells me to keep concealed. My presence would betray the character of this ship. You forget I am known to all in yonder cruiser."

"I had indeed forgotten that portion of the plot. Then remain while I go to play upon the credulity of his Majesty's captain."

Without waiting for an answer, the Rover led the way below, signing for his companion to follow. A few moments sufficed to arrange the fair golden locks that imparted such a look of youth and vivacity to the countenance of the former. The undress, fanciful frock he wore in common was exchanged for the attire of one of his assumed rank and service, which had been made to fit his person with the nicest care, and with a coxcombical attention to the proportions of his really fine person; and in all other things was he speedily equipped for the disguise he chose to affect. No sooner were these alterations completed (and they were effected with a brevity and readiness that manifested much practice in similar artifices), than he disposed himself to proceed on the intended experiment.

"Truer and quicker eyes have been deceived," he coolly observed, turning his glance from a mirror to the countenance of his lieutenant, "than those which embellish the rugged countenance of Captain Bignall."

"You know him, then?"

"Mr. Wilder, my business imposes the necessity of knowing much that other men overlook. Nor is this adventure, which, by your features, I perceive you deem so forlorn in its hopes of success, one of easy achievement. I am convinced that not an officer or man on board the *Dart* has ever seen the ship whose name I have chosen to usurp. She is too fresh from the stocks to incur that risk. Then there is little probability that I, in my other self, shall be compelled to acknowledge acquaintance with any of her officers; for you well know that years have passed since your late ship has been in Europe; and, by running your eye over these books, you will perceive, I am that favored mortal, the son of a lord, and have not only grown into command, but into manhood since her departure from home."

"These are certainly favoring circumstances, and such as I have not the sagacity to detect. But why incur the risk at all?"

"Why! Perhaps there is a deep-laid scheme to learn if the prize would repay the loss of her capture—perhaps it is only my humor. There is fearful excitement in the adventure!"

"And there is fearful danger."

"I never count the price of these enjoyments, Wilder," he added, turning to him with a look of frank and courteous confidence. "I place life and honor in your keeping; for to me it would be dishonor to desert the interests of my crew."

"The trust shall be respected," repeated our adventurer in a tone so deep and choked as to be nearly unintelligible.

Regarding the countenance of his companion intently for an instant, the Rover smiled, as if he approved of the pledge, waved his hand in adieu, and turning, was about to leave the cabin; but a third form, at that moment, caught his wandering glance. Laying a hand lightly on the shoulder of the boy, whose form was placed somewhat obtrusively in his way, he demanded, a little sternly—

"Roderick, what means this preparation?"

"To follow my master to the boat."

"Boy, thy service is not needed."

"It is rarely wanted of late."

"Why should I add unnecessarily to the risk of lives, when no good can attend the hazard?"

"In risking your own, you risk all to me."

The answer was given in a tone so resigned, and yet so faltering, that the tremulous and nearly smothered sounds caught no ears but those for whom they were intended.

The Rover for a time replied not. His hand still kept its place on the shoulder of the boy, whose working features he read, as the eye is sometimes wont to penetrate the mysteries of the heart.

"Roderick," he said, in a milder and kinder voice, "your lot shall be mine; we will go together."

Dashing his hand hastily across his brow, the wayward chief ascended the ladder, attended by the lad, and followed by the individual in whose faith he reposed so great a trust. The step with which the Rover trod the deck was firm, and the bearing of his form as steady, as if he felt no hazard in his undertaking. His look passed, with a seamen's care, from sail to sail; not a brace, yard, or bowline escaped the quick glances he cast about him, before he proceeded to the side. At length he entered a boat which he had ordered to be in waiting. A glimmering of distrust and hesitation was now, for the first time, discoverable through the decision of his features. For a moment, his foot lingered on the ladder. "Davis," he said sternly, speaking to the individual whom, by experience, he knew to be well practiced in treachery, "leave the boat. Send me the gruff captain of the forecastle in his place. So bold a talker in common should know how to be silent at need."

The exchange was instantly made; for no one there was ever known to dispute a mandate that was uttered with the air of authority he then wore. A deeply intent attitude of thought succeeded; then every shadow of care vanished from his brow. A look of high and generous confidence was seated in its place, as he added:

"Wilder, adieu! I leave you captain of my people and master of my fate; I am certain that both trusts are reposed in worthy hands."

Without waiting for reply, as if scorning the vain ceremony of idle assurances, he descended swiftly into the boat, which at the next instant was pulling boldly toward the King's cruiser. The brief interval between the departure of the adventurers and their arrival at the hostile ship was one of intense and absorbing suspense on the part of all whom they had left behind. The individual most interested in the event, however, betrayed none of the anxiety which so intently beset the minds of his followers. He mounted the side of his enemy amid the honors due to his imaginary rank with a self-possession and ease that might readily have been mistaken, by those who believe these fancied qualities have a real existence, for the grace and dignity of lofty recollections and high birth. His reception by the honest veteran whose long and hard services had received but a meager reward in the vessel he commanded, was frank, manly, and seamanlike. The usual greetings had no sooner passed, than the latter conducted his guest to his own apartments.

"Find such a berth, Captain Howard, as suits your inclinations," said the unceremonious old seaman, seating himself as frankly as he invited his companion to imitate his example. "A gentleman of your extraordinary merit must be reluctant to lose time in useless words, though you are so young—young for the pretty command it is your good fortune to enjoy!"

"On the contrary, I do assure you, I begin to feel myself quite an antediluvian," returned the Rover, coolly placing himself at the opposite side of the table, where he might, from time to time, look his half-disgusted companion in the eye; "would you imagine it, sir, I shall have reached the age of three-and-twenty, if I live through the day?"

"I had given you a few more years, young gentleman; but London can ripen the human face as speedily as the equator."

"You never said truer words, sir. Of all cruising grounds, Heaven defend me from that of St. James's! I do assure you, Bignall, the service is quite sufficient to wear out the strongest constitution. There were moments when I really thought I should have died that humble, disagreeable mortal—a lieutenant!"

"Your disease would have been a galloping consumption!" muttered the old seaman. "They have sent you out in a pretty boat at last, Captain Howard."

"She is bearable, Bignall, but frightfully small. I told my father that if the first lord didn't speedily regenerate the service by building more comfortable vessels, the navy would get altogether into vulgar hands. Don't you find the motion excessively annoying in these single-decked ships, Bignall?"

"When a man has been tossing up and down for five-and-forty years, Captain Howard," returned his host, stroking his gray locks, for want of some other manner of suppressing his ire, "he gets to be indifferent whether his ship pitches a foot more or a foot less."

"Ah! that, I dare say, is what one calls philosophical equanimity, though it is little to my humor. But, after this cruise, I am to be posted; and then I shall make interest for a guard-ship in the Thames; everything goes by interest, nowadays, you know, Bignall!"

The honest old tar swallowed his displeasure as well as he could; and, as the most effectual means of keeping himself in a condition to do credit to his own hospitality, he hastened to change the subject.

"I hope, among other new fashions, Captain Howard," he said, "the flag of Old England continues to fly over the Admiralty. You wore the colors of Louis so long this morning, that another half-hour might have brought us to loggerheads."

"O! that was an excellent military ruse! I shall certainly write the particulars of that deception home."

"Do so; do so, sir; you may get knighthood for the exploit."

"Horrible, Bignall! My lady-mother would faint at the suggestion. Nothing so low has been in the family, I do assure you, since the time when chivalry was genteel."

"Well, well, Captain Howard, it was happy for us both that you got rid of your Gallic humor so soon; for a little more time would have drawn a broadside from me. By heavens, sir, the guns of this ship would have gone off of themselves in another five minutes!"

"It is quite happy as it is. What do you find to amuse you (yawning) in this dull quarter of the world, Bignall?"

"Why, sir, what between his Majesty's enemies, the care of my ship, and the company of my officers, I find few heavy moments."

"Ah! your officers; true, you *must* have officers on board; though, I suppose, they are a little oldish to be agreeable to *you*. Will you favor me with a sight of the list?"

The commander of the *Dart* did as he was requested, putting the quarter-bill of his ship into the hands of his unknown enemy, with an eye that was far too honest to condescend to bestow even a look on a being so despised.

"What a list of thorough mouthers!

All Yarmouth, and Plymouth, and Portsmouth, and Exmouth names, I do affirm. Here are Smiths enough to do the ironwork of the whole ship. Ha! here is a fellow that might do good service in a deluge. Who may this Henry Ark be, that I find rated as your first lieutenant?"

"A youth who wants but a few drops of your blood, Captain Howard, to be one day at the head of his Majesty's fleet."

"If he be then so extraordinary for his merit, Captain Bignall, may I presume on your politeness to ask him to favor us with his society? I always give my lieutenant half an hour of a morning—if he happen to be bearable."

"Poor boy! God knows where he is to be found at this moment. The noble fellow has embarked, of his own accord, on a most dangerous service, and I am as ignorant as yourself of his success. Remonstrance and even entreaties were of no avail. The Admiral had great need of a suitable agent, and the good of the nation demanded the risk; then, you know, men of humble birth must earn their preferment in cruising elsewhere than at St. James's; for the brave lad is indebted to a wreck, in which he was found an infant, for the very name you find so singular."

"He is, however, still borne upon your books as first lieutenant, I see?"

"And I hope ever will be, until he shall get the ship he so well merits. Good heaven! are you ill, Captain Howard? Boy, a tumbler of grog here."

"I thank you, sir," returned the Rover, smiling calmly, and rejecting the offered beverage, as the blood returned into his features with a violence that threatened to break through the ordinary boundaries of its currents. "It is no more than an ailing I inherit from my mother. We call it in our family, the 'De Vere ivory,' for no other reason that I could ever learn, than that one of my female ancestors was particularly startled, in a delicate situation, you know, by an elephant's tooth. I am told it has rather an amiable look, while it lasts."

"It has the look of a man who is fitter for his mother's nursery than a gale of wind. But I am glad it is so soon over."

"No one wears the same face long nowadays, Bignall. And so this Mr. Ark is not anybody, after all?"

"I know not what you call 'anybody,' sir; but if sterling courage, great professional merit, and stern loyalty count for anything in your estimation, Captain Howard, Henry Ark will soon be in command of a frigate."

"Perhaps, if one only knew exactly on what to found his claims," continued the Rover, with a smile so kind, and a voice so insinuating, that they half counteracted the effect of his assumed manner, "a word might be dropped in a letter home, that should do the youth no harm."

"I would to Heaven I dared but reveal the nature of the service he is on!" eagerly returned the warm-hearted old seaman, who was as quick to forget, as he was sudden to feel, disgust. "You may, however, safely say, from his general character, that it is honorable, hazardous, and has the entire good of his Majesty's subjects in view. Indeed, an hour has scarcely gone by since I thought it was completely successful. Do you often set your lofty sails, Captain Howard, while the heavier canvas is rolled upon the yards? To me, a ship clothed in that style looks something like a man with his coat on, before he has cased his legs in the lower garments."

"You allude to the accident of the main-top-gallant-sail getting loose when you first made me?"

"I mean no other. We caught a glimpse of your spars with the glass; but had lost you altogether, when the flying duck met the eye of the lookout. To say the least it was remarkable, and it might have proved an awkward circumstance."

"Ah! I often do things in that way, in order to be odd. It is a sign of cleverness to be odd. But I, too, am sent into these seas on a special errand."

"Such as what?" bluntly demanded his companion, with an uneasiness about his frowning eye that he was far too simple-minded to conceal."

"To look for a ship that will certainly give me a famous lift, should I have the good luck to fall in with her. For some

time, I took you for the very gentleman I was in search of; and I do assure you, if your signals had not been so very unexceptionable, something serious might have happened between us."

"And pray, sir, for whom did you take me?"

"For no other than that notorious knave, the Red Rover."

"The devil you did! And do you suppose, Captain Howard, there is a private afloat who carries such hamper above his head as is to be found aboard the *Dart!* Such a set to her sails—such a step to her masts—and such a trim to her hull? I hope, for the honor of your vessel, sir, that the mistake went no farther than the captain!"

"Until we got within reading distance of the signals, at least a moiety of the better opinions in my ship was dead against you, Bignall, I give you my declaration. You've really been so long from home, that the *Dart* is getting quite a roving look. You may not be sensible of it, but I assure you of the fact merely as a friend."

"And, perhaps, since you did me honor to mistake my vessel for a freebooter," returned the old tar, smothering his ire in a look of facetious irony, which changed the expression of his mouth to a grim grin, "you might have conceited this honest gentleman here to be no other than Beelzebub."

As he spoke, the commander of the ship which had borne so odious an imputation directed the eyes of his companion to the form of a third individual, who entered the cabin with the freedom of a privileged person, but with a tread so light as to be inaudible. As this unexpected form met the quick, impatient glance of the pretended officer of the crown, he arose involuntarily, and, for half a minute, that admirable command of muscle and nerve which had served him so well in maintaining his masquerade appeared entirely to desert him. The loss of self-possession, however, was for a time so short as to attract no notice; and he coolly returned the salutations of an aged man, of a meek and a subdued look, with that air of blandness and courtesy which he so well knew how to assume.

"This gentleman is your chaplain, sir, I presume, by his clerical attire," he said, after he had exchanged bows with the stranger..

"He is, sir. A worthy and an honest man, whom I am not ashamed to call my friend. After a separation of thirty years, the admiral has been good enough to lend him to me for the cruise; and, though my ship is none of the largest, I believe he finds himself as comfortable in her as he would aboard the flag. This gentleman, doctor, is the *Honorable* Captain Howard, of his Majesty's ship *Antelope*. I need not expatiate on his remarkable merit, since the command he bears at his years is a sufficient testimony on that important particular."

There was a look of bewildered surprise in the gaze of the divine, when his glance first fell upon the features of the pretended scion of nobility; but it was far less striking than had been that of the subject of his gaze, and of much shorter continuance. He bowed meekly, and with the respect which long use begets in those who are accustomed to pay deference to hereditary rank; but he did not appear to consider that the occasion required more than the customary words of salutation. The Rover turned calmly to his veteran companion, and continued the discourse.

"Captain Bignall," he said, again wearing that grace of manner which became him so well, "it is my duty to follow your motions in this interview. I will now return to my ship; and if, as I begin to suspect, we are in these seas on a similar errand, we can concert at our leisure a system of co-operation, which, properly matured by your experience, may serve to bring about the common end we have in view."

Greatly mollified by this concession to his years and to his rank, the commander of the *Dart* pressed his hospitalities more warmly on his guest, winding up his civilities by an invitation to join in a marine feast at an hour somewhat later in the day. All the former offers were politely declined, while the latter was accepted;

the invited making the invitation itself an excuse that he should return to his own vessel, in order that he might select such of his officers as he should deem most worthy of participating in the promised banquet. The veteran and really meritorious Bignall, notwithstanding the ordinary sturdy blustering of his character, had served too long in indigence and comparative obscurity not to feel some of the longings of human nature for his hard-earned and protracted preferment. He consequently kept, in the midst of all his native and manly honesty, a wary eye on the means of accomplishing this material object. It is to occasion no surprise, therefore, that his parting from the supposed son of a powerful champion at court was more amicable than the meeting. The Rover was bowed from the cabin to the deck, with at least an appearance of returning good-will. On reaching the latter, a hurried, suspicious, and perhaps an uneasy glance was thrown from his restless eyes on many faces that were grouped around the gangway; but their expression became calm again, and a little supercilious withal, in order to do no discredit to the part in the comedy which it was his present humor to enact. Then, shaking the worthy and thoroughly deceived old seaman heartily by the hand, he touched his hat, with an air of half-haughty, half-condescending to his inferiors. He was in the act of descending into the boat, when the chaplain was seen to whisper something, with great earnestness, in the ear of the captain. The commander hastened to recall his departing guest desiring him, with startling gravity, to lend him his private attention for another moment. Suffering himself to be led apart by the two, the Rover stood awaiting their pleasure, with a coolness of demeanor that, under the peculiar circumstances of his case, did signal credit to his nerves.

"Captain Howard," resumed the warm-hearted Bignall, "have you a gentleman of the cloth in your vessel?"

"Two, sir," was the answer.

"Two! It is rare to find a supernumerary priest in a man of war! But, I suppose, court influence could give the fellow a bishop," muttered the other. "You are fortunate in this particular, young gentleman, since I am indebted to inclination rather than to custom for the society of my worthy friend here. He has, however, made a point that I should include the reverend gentleman—I should say gentle*men*—in the invitation."

"You shall have all the divinity of my ship, Bignall, on my faith."

"I believe I was particular in naming your first lieutenant."

"O! dead or alive, he shall surely be of your party," returned the Rover, with a suddenness and vehemence of utterance that occasioned both his auditors to start with surprise. "You may not find him an ark to rest your weary foot on; but, such as he is, he is entirely at your service. And now, once more, I salute you."

Bowing again, he proceeded with his former deliberate air over the gangway, keeping his eye riveted on the lofty gear of the *Dart*, as he descended her side, with the sort of expression with which a *petit-maitre* is apt to regard the fashion of the garments of one newly arrived from the provinces. His superior repeated his invitation with warmth, and waved his hand in a frank but temporary adieu; thus unconsciously suffering the man to escape him, whose capture would have purchased the long postponed and still distant advantages for whose possession he secretly pined with the withering longings of a hope cruelly deferred.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Let them accuse me by invention; I will answer in mine honor."—CORIOLANUS.

"YES," muttered the Rover, as his boat rowed under the stern of the royal cruiser; "yes! I and my officers will taste of your banquet! But the viands shall be such as these hirelings of the King shall little relish! Pull with a will, my men, pull; in an hour you shall rummage the store-room of that fool for reward!"

The greedy freebooters could scarcely

restrain their shouts, in order to maintain the air of moderation which policy imposed; but they gave vent to their excitement by redoubling their efforts to regain their own ship. In another minute, the adventurers were all in safety again under the sheltering guns of the *Dolphin*.

His people gathered, from the haughty eye of the Rover, as his foot once more touched the deck of his own ship, that the period of action was at hand. For an instant, he lingered on the quarter-deck, surveying, with stern joy, the sturdy materials of his command; then he abruptly entered his cabin, forgetful that he had conceded it to others, or, in the excited state of his mind, indifferent to the circumstance. A sudden and tremendous blow on the gong announced not only his presence, but his humor.

"Let the first lieutenant be told I await him!" was the order that followed the appearance of the attendant he had summoned.

During the short period that elapsed before his mandate could be obeyed, the Rover seemed struggling with a passion that choked him. But when the door of the cabin was opened, and Wilder stood before him, the most suspicious and closest observer might have sought in vain any evidence of the fierce feelings which agitated the inward man. With the recovery of his self-command returned a recollection of the manner of his intrusion into a place which he had himself ordained should be privileged. It was then that he first sought the shrinking females, and hastened to relieve the terror that was too plainly to be seen in their countenances, by words of apology and explanation.

"In the hurry of an interview with a friend," he said, "I may have forgotten that I am host to even such guests as it is my happiness to entertain, though I discharge my duties so indifferently."

"Spare your civilties, sir," said Mrs. Wyllys, with dignity. "In order to make us less sensible of intrusion, be pleased to act the master here."

The Rover first saw the ladies seated; and then, like one who appeared to think the occasion might excuse any little departure from customary forms, he signed, with a smile of high courtesy, to his lieutenant to imitate their example.

"His Majesty's artisans have sent worse ships than the *Dart* upon the ocean, Wilder," he commenced, significantly, as if he intended that the other should supply all the meaning that his words did not express; "but his ministers might have selected a more observant individual for the command."

"Captain Bignall has the reputation of a brave and honest man."

"He should deserve it; strip him of these two qualities, and little would remain. He gives me to understand that he is especially sent into this latitude in quest of a ship that we have all heard of, either in good or in evil report; I speak of the *Red Rover!*"

The involuntary start of Mrs. Wyllys, and the sudden manner in which Gertrude grasped the arm of her governess, were certainly seen by the speaker, but in no degree did his manner betray the consciousness of such an observation. His self-possession was admirably emulated by Wilder, who answered with a composure that no jealousy could have seen was assumed—

"His cruise will be hazardous, not to say without success."

"It may prove both. And yet he has lofty expectations of the results."

"He probably labors under the common error as to the character of the man he seeks."

"In what does he mistake?"

"In supposing that he will encounter an ordinary freebooter; one coarse, rapacious, ignorant, and inexorable, like others of——"

"Of what, sir?"

"I would have said, of his class; but a mariner like him we speak of forms the head of his own order."

"We will call him, then, by his popular name, Mr. Wilder—a rover. But is it not remarkable that so experienced a seaman should come to this little frequented sea in quest of a ship whose pursuits ought to call her into more bustling scenes?"

"He may have traced her through the narrow passages of the islands, and followed on the course she has last been seen steering."

"He may, indeed," returned the Rover, musing. "Your thorough mariner knows how to calculate the chances of winds and currents, as the bird finds its way in the air. Still, a description of the ship would at least be needed, as a clew."

Wilder, notwithstanding an effort to the contrary, suffered his eyes to sink before the piercing gaze they encountered.

"Perhaps he is not without that knowledge, too," he answered.

"Perhaps not. Indeed, he gave me reason to believe he has an agent in the secrets of his enemy. Nay, he expressly avowed the same, and acknowledged that his prospects of success depended on the skill and information of that individual, who, no doubt, has his private means of communicating what he learns of the movements of those with whom he serves."

"Did he name him?"

"He did."

"It was——"

"Henry—Ark, *alias* Wilder!"

"It is vain to attempt denial," said our adventurer, rising with an air of pride that he intended should conceal the uneasy sensation that in truth beset him; "I find you know me."

"For a false trăitor, sir!"

"Captain Heidegger, you are safe, here, in using these reproachful terms."

The Rover struggled, successfully, to keep down the risings of his temper; but the effort lent to his countenance gleamings of fierce scorn.

"You will communicate that fact also to your superiors," he said, with a taunting irony. "The monster of the seas, he who plunders defenseless fishermen, ravages unprotected coasts, and eludes the flag of King George, as other serpents steal into their caves at the footstep of man, is safe in speaking his mind, backed by a hundred and fifty freebooters, and in the security of his own cabin. Perhaps he knows, too, that he is breathing in the atmosphere of peaceful and peace-making woman."

But the first surprise of the subject of his scorn had passed, and he was neither to be goaded into retort nor terrified into entreaties. Folding his arms with calmness, Wilder simply replied—

"I have incurred this risk, in order to drive a scourge from the ocean which had baffled all other attempts at its extermination. I knew the hazard, and shall not shrink from its penalty."

"You shall not, sir!" returned the Rover, striking the gong again with a finger that appeared to carry in its touch the weight of a giant. "Let the negro, and the topman his companion, be secured in irons; on no account permit them to communicate by word or signal with the other ship." When the agent of his punishments, who entered at the well-known summons, had retired, he again turned to the firm and motionless form that stood before him. "Mr. Wilder," he continued, "there is a law which binds together this community, into which you have so treacherously stolen, that would consign you and your miserable confederates to the yardarm, the instant your true character should be known to my people. I have but to open that door, and to pronounce the nature of your treason, and to yield you to the tender mercies of the crew."

"You will not! no, you will not!" cried a voice at his elbow, which thrilled on even his iron nerves. "You have forgotten the ties which bind man to his fellows, but cruelty is not natural to your heart. By all the recollections of your earliest and happiest days; by the tenderness and pity which watched your childhood; by that holy and omniscient Being who suffers not a hair of the innocent to go unrevenged, I conjure you to pause, before you forget your own awful responsibility. No! you will not—cannot—dare not be so merciless!"

"What fate did he contemplate for me and my followers, when he entered on this insidious design?" hoarsely demanded the Rover.

"The laws of God and man are with him," continued Mrs. Wyllys, for it was she; "'tis reason that speaks in my

voice; 'tis mercy, which I know is pleading at your heart. The cause, the motive, sanctify his acts; while your career can find justification in the laws neither of heaven or earth."

"This is bold language to sound in the ears of a blood-seeking, remorseless pirate!" said the other, looking around with a smile so proud that it seemed to proclaim how plainly he saw that the speaker reued on the very reverse of the qualities he named.

"It is the language of truth; and ears like yours cannot be deaf to the sounds. If——"

"Lady, cease!" interrupted the Rover, stretching his arm toward her with calmness. "My resolution was formed on the instant; and no remonstrance, nor apprehension of the consequence, can change it. Mr. Wilder, you are free. If you have not served me as faithfully as I once expected, you have taught me a lesson in the art of physiognomy which shall leave me a wiser man for the rest of my days."

The conscious Wilder stood self-condemned and humbled. The strugglings which stirred his inmost soul were to be read in the workings of a countenance that was no longer masked in artifice, but which expressed both shame and sorrow. The conflict lasted but a moment.

"Perhaps you know not the extent of my object, Captain Heidegger," he said; "it embraced the forfeit of your life, and the destruction or dispersion of your crew!"

"According to the established usages of that portion of the world which, having the power, oppresses the remainder, it did. Go, sir; rejoin your proper ship; I repeat, you are free."

"I cannot leave you, Captain Heidegger, without one word of justification."

"What! can the hunted, denounced, and condemned freebooter command an explanation? Is even his good opinion necessary to a virtuous servant of the crown?"

"Use such terms of triumph and reproach as suit your pleasure, sir; to me your language can convey no offense; still I would not leave you without removing part of the odium which you think I merit."

"Speak freely, sir, you are my guest."

The most cutting revilings could not have wounded the repentant Wilder so deeply as this generous conduct, but he subdued his feelings and continued—

"You are not now to learn," he said, "that vulgar rumor has given a color to your conduct and character which is not of a quality to command esteem."

"You may find leisure to deepen the tints," hastily interrupted his listener, though the tremor in his voice denoted how deeply he felt the wound given by a world that he affected to despise.

"If called upon to speak at all, my words shall be those of truth, Captain Heidegger. Is it surprising that, filled with the ardor of a service you once thought honorable yourself, I should be found willing to risk life, and, if you will, even to play the hypocrite, in order to achieve an object that would not only have been rewarded, but approved, had it been successful? With such sentiments I embarked on this enterprise; but, as Heaven is my judge, your manly confidence had half disarmed me, when my foot had hardly crossed the threshold of my enterprise."

"You turned not back?"

"There might have been irresistible reasons to the contrary," resumed the defendant, glancing his eyes to the females. "I kept my faith at Newport; and, had my two followers then been released from your ship, my foot should never have entered her again."

"Young man, I am willing to believe you. I think I penetrate your motives. You have played a delicate game: instead of repining, you will one day rejoice that it has been fruitless. Go, sir; a boat shall attend you to the *Dart*."

"Deceive not yourself, Captain Heidegger, in believing that any generosity of yours can shut my eyes to my proper duty. The instant I am seen by the commander of the ship you name, your character will be betrayed."

"I expect it."

"Nor will my hand be idle in the strug-

gle that must follow. I may die here, a victim to my mistake, if you please; but, the moment I am released, I unavoidably become your enemy."

"Wilder!" exclaimed the Rover, grasping his hand with a smile that partook of the wild energy of his manner, "we should have become acquainted earlier! But regret is idle. Go; should my people learn the truth, any remonstrance of mine would be like whispers in a whirlwind."

"When I joined the *Dolphin* last I did not come alone."

"Is it not enough," rejoined the Rover, recoiling a step, "that I offer you liberty and life?"

"Of what service can a being, fair, helpless, and unfortunate as this, be in a ship devoted to pursuits like those of the *Dolphin?*"

"Am I to be cut off forever from communion with the best of my kind? Go, sir; leave me the image of virtue, at least, though I may be wanting in its substance."

"Captain Heidegger, once, in the warmth of your better feelings, you pronounced a pledge in favor of these females, which I hope came from your heart."

"I understand you, sir. What I then said is not, nor shall it be, forgotten. But wither would you lead your companions? Is not one vessel on the high seas as safe as another? Am I to be deprived of every means of making friends unto myself? Leave me, sir—go—you may linger until my permission to depart cannot avail you."

"I shall never desert my charge," said Wilder, firmly.

"Mr. Wilder—or I should rather call you Lieutenant Ark, I believe," returned the Rover, "you may trifle with my good nature till the moment of your own security be passed."

"Act your will on me, I die at my post, or go accompanied by those with whom I came."

"Sir, the acquaintance of which you boast is not older than my own. How know you that they prefer you for their protector? I have deceived myself and done poor justice to my own intentions, if they have found cause for complaints, since their happiness or comfort has been in my keeping. Speak, fair one; which of us do you choose for a protector?"

"Leave me, leave me!" exclaimed Gertrude, veiling her eyes from the insidious smile with which he approached her, as she would have avoided the glance of a basilisk. "O! if you have pity in your heart, let us quit your ship!"

Notwithstanding the vast self-command which the being she so ungovernably and spontaneously repelled had in common over his feelings, no effort could repress the look of deep and humiliating mortification with which he heard her. A cold and haggard smile gleamed over his features, as he murmured, in a voice which he in vain endeavored to smother—

"I have purchased this disgust from all of my species, and dearly must the penalty be paid! Lady, you and your lovely ward are mistresses of your own acts. This ship and this cabin are at your command; or, if you elect to quit both, others will receive you."

"Safety for our sex is only to be found beneath the fostering protection of the laws," said Mrs. Wyllys. "Would to God——"

"Enough!" he interrupted, "you shall accompany your friend. The ship will not be emptier than my heart, when all have left me."

"Did you call?" asked a low voice at his elbow, in tones so plaintive and mild that they could not fail to catch his ear.

"Roderick," he hurriedly replied, "you will find occupation below. Leave us, good Roderick. For a while, leave me."

Then, as if anxious to close the scene as speedily as possible, he gave another of his signals on the gong. An order was given to convey Fid and the black into a boat, whither he also sent the scanty baggage of his female guests. So soon as these brief arrangements were completed, he handed the governess, with studied courtesy, through his wondering people, to the side, and saw her safely seated, with her ward and Wilder, in the pinnace. The oars were manned by the two seamen, and a silent adieu was given by a wave of

his hand; after which he disappeared from those to whom their present release seemed as imaginary and unreal as most of the other events of the few preceding weeks.

The threat of the interference of the crew of the *Dolphin* was, however, still ringing in the ears of Wilder. He made an impatient gesture to his attendants to ply their oars, cautiously steering the boat on such a course as would soonest lead her from beneath the guns of the freebooters.

While passing under the stern of the *Dolphin*, a hoarse hail was sent across the waters, and the voice of the Rover was heard speaking to the commander of the *Dart*.

"I send you a party of your guests," he said; "and, among them, all the divinity of my ship."

The passage was short; nor was time given for the liberated to arrange their thoughts, before it became necessary to ascend the side of the cruiser of the crown.

"Heaven help us!" exclaimed Bignall, catching a glimpse of the sex of his visitors through a port; "Heaven help us both, parson! That young hare-brained fellow has sent us a brace of petticoats aboard; and these the profane reprobate calls his divinities! One may easily guess where he has picked up such quality; but, cheer up, doctor; we may honestly forget the cloth in five fathom water, you know."

The facetious laugh of the old commander of the *Dart* betrayed that he was more than half disposed to overlook the fancied presumption of his audacious inferior; furnishing a sort of pledge that no undue scruples should defeat the hilarity of the moment. But when Gertrude, flushed with the excitement through which she had just passed, and beaming with a loveliness that derived so much of its character from its innocence, appeared on his deck, the veteran rubbed his eyes in an amazement which could not have been greatly surpassed, had one of that species of beings the Rover had named actually fallen at his feet from the skies.

"The heartless scoundrel!" cried the worthy tar, "to lead astray one so young and so lovely! Ha! as I live, my own lieutenant! How's this, Mr. Ark? have we fallen on the days of miracles?"

An exclamation, which came from the heart of the governess, and a low and mournful echo from the lips of the divine, interrupted the farther expression of his indignation and his wonder.

"Captain Bignall," observed the latter, pointing to the tottering form which was leaning on Wilder for support; "on my life, you are mistaken in the character of this lady. It is more than twenty years since we last met, but I pledge my own character for the purity and truth of hers."

"Lead me to the cabin," murmured Mrs. Wyllys. "Gertrude, my love, where are we? Lead me to some secret place."

Her request was complied with; the whole party retiring in a body from the sight of the spectators who thronged the deck. Here the agitated governess regained a portion of her self-command, and then her wandering gaze met the meek countenance of the chaplain.

"This is a tardy and heart-rending meeting," she said, pressing the hand he gave her to her lips. "Gertrude, in this gentleman you see the divine that united me to the man who once formed the pride and happiness of my existence."

"Mourn not his loss," whispered the reverend priest, bending over her chair with the interest of a parent. "He was taken from you at an early hour; but he died as all who loved him might have wished."

"And none was left to bear, in remembrance of his qualities, his name to posterity? Tell me, good Merton, is not the hand of Providence visible in this dispensation? Ought I not humble myself before it, as a just punishment of my disobedience to an affectionate, though too obdurate parent?"

"None may presume to pry into the mysteries of the righteous government which orders all thing. Enough for us, that we learn to submit to the will of Him who rules, without questioning His justice."

"But," continued the governess, in tones so husky as to betray how powerfully she felt the temptation to forget his admonition, "would not one life have sufficed? was I to be deprived of all?"

"Madam, reflect! What has been done was done in wisdom, as I trust it was in mercy."

"You say truly. I will forget all of the sad events, but their application to myself. And you, worthy and benevolent Merton, where and how have you passed your days since the time of which we speak?"

"I am but a low and humble shepherd of a truant flock," returned the meek chaplain, with a sigh. "Many distant seas have I visited, and many strange faces, and stranger natures, has it been my lot to encounter in my pilgrimage. I am but lately returned from the East, into the hemispheres where I first drew breath; and, by permission of our superiors, I came to pass a month in the vessel of a companion whose friendship bears even an older date than yours."

"Aye, aye, madam," returned the worthy Bignall, whose feelings had been a little disturbed by the previous scene; "it is near half a century since the parson and I were boys together, and we have been rubbing up old recollections on the cruise. Happy am I that a lady of so commendable qualities has come to make one of our party."

"In this lady you see the daughter of the late Captain ——, and the relict of the son of our ancient commander, Rear Admiral De Lacey," hastily resumed the divine, as if he knew the well-meaning honesty of his friend was more to be trusted than his discretion.

"I knew them both; brave men and thorough seamen were the pair! The lady was welcome as your friend, Merton; but she is doubly so, as the widow and child of the gentlemen you name."

"De Lacey!" murmured a voice in the ear of the governess.

"The law gives me a title to bear that name," returned she whom we shall still continue to call by her assumed appellation, folding her weeping pupil long and affectionately to her bosom. "The veil is unexpectedly withdrawn, my love, and concealment would now be worse than useless. My father was the captain of the flagship. Necessity compelled him to leave me more in the society of your young relative than he would have done, could he have foreseen the consequences. But I knew both his pride and his poverty too well to dare to make him arbiter of my fate, after the alternative became, to my inexperienced imagination, worse even than his anger. We were privately united by this gentleman, and neither of our parents knew of the connection. Death——"

The voice of the widow become choked, and she made a sign to the chaplain, as if she would have him continue the tale.

"Mr. De Lacey and his father-in-law fell in the same battle, within a short month of the ceremony," added the subdued voice of Merton. "Even you, dearest madam, never knew the melancholy particulars of their end. I was a solitary witness of their deaths; for to me were they both consigned, amid the confusion of the battle. Their blood was mingled; and your parent, in blessing the young hero, unconsciously blessed his son."

"O! I deceived his noble nature, and dearly have I paid the penalty!" exclaimed the self-abased widow. "Tell me, Merton, did he ever know of my marriage?"

"He did not. Mr. De Lacey died first, and upon his bosom, for he loved him ever as a child; but other thoughts than useless explanations were uppermost in their minds."

"Gertrude," said the governess, in hollow, repentant tones, "there is no peace for our feeble sex but in submission; no happiness but in obedience."

"It is over now," whispered the weeping girl; "all over and forgotten. I am your child—your own Gertrude, the creature of your formation."

"Harry Ark!" exclaimed Bignall, clearing his throat with a hem so vigorous as to carry the sound to the outer deck, seizing the arm of his entranced lieutenant, and dragging him from the

scene while he spoke. "What the devil besets the boy! You forget that, all this time, I am as ignorant of your own adventures as his Majesty's prime minister is of navigation. Why do I see you here, a visitor from a royal cruiser, when I thought you were playing the mock pirate? and how came that harum-scarum twig of nobility in possession of so goodly a company, as well as of so brave a ship?"

Wilder drew a long breath, like one that awakes from a pleasing dream, reluctantly suffering himself to be forced from a spot where he fondly felt that he could have continued, without weariness, forever.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Let them achieve me, and then sell my bones."
—HENRY V.

THE commander of the *Dart* and his bewildered lieutenant had gained the quarter-deck before either spoke again. The direction first taken by the eyes of the latter was in quest of the neighboring ship; nor was the look entirely without that unsettled and vague expression which seems to announce a momentary aberration of the faculties. But the vessel of the Rover was in view, in all the palpable and beautiful proportions of her admirable construction. Instead of lying in a state of rest, as when he left her, her head-yards had been swung, and as the sails filled with the breeze, the stately fabric had begun to move gracefully, though with no great velocity, along the water. There was not the slightest appearance in the evolution, however, of any attempt at escape. On the contrary, the loftier and higher sails were all furled, and men were at the moment actively employed in sending to the deck those smaller spars which were absolutely requisite in spreading the canvas that would be needed in facilitating her flight. Wilder turned from the sight with a sickening apprehension; for he well knew that these were the preparations that skillful mariners are wont to make, when bent on desperate combat.

"Aye, yonder goes your St. James's seaman, with his three topsails full, and his mizzen out, as if he had already forgotten he is to dine with me, and that his name is to be found at one end of the list of commanders, and mine at the other," grumbled the displeased Bignall. "But we shall have him coming round, I suppose, when his appetite tells him the dinner hour. He might wear his colors in presence of a senior, too, and no disgrace to his nobility. By the Lord, Harry Ark, he handles his yards beautifully! I warrant you, now, some honest man's son is sent aboard his ship for a dry nurse, in the shape of a first lieutenant, and we shall have him vaporing, all dinner time, about 'how my ship does this,' and 'I never suffer that.' Ha! is it not so, sir? He has a thorough seaman for his first?"

"Few men understand the profession better than the captain of yonder vessel himself," returned Wilder.

"The devil he does! You have been talking with him, Mr. Ark, about these matters, and he has got some of the fashions of the *Dart*. I can see into a mystery as quick as another."

"I do assure you, Captain Bignall, there is no safety in confiding in the ignorance of yonder extraordinary man."

"Aye, aye, I begin to overhaul his character. The young dog is a quiz, and has been amusing himself with a sailor of what he calls the old school. Am I right, sir? He has seen salt water before this cruise!"

"He is almost a native of the seas; for more than thirty years he has passed his time on them."

"There, Harry Ark, he has done you handsomely. Now, I have his own assertion for it, that he will not be three-and-twenty until to-morrow."

"On my word, he has deceived you, sir."

"I don't know, Mr. Ark; that is a task much easier attempted than performed. Threescore and four years old add as much weight to a man's head as to his heels! I may have undervalued the skill of the younker, but as to his years there can be no great mistake. But

where the devil is the fellow steering to? Has he need of a pinafore from his lady-mother to come on board of a man-of-war to dine?"

"See! he is indeed standing from us!" exclaimed Wilder, with a rapidity and delight that would have excited the suspicion of one more observant than his commander.

"If I know the stern from the bows of a ship, what you say is truth," returned the other, with some austerity. "Hark ye, Mr. Ark, I've a mind to furnish the coxcomb a lesson in respect for his superiors, and give him a row to whet his appetite. By the Lord, I will; and he may write home an account of his maneuver, too, in his next dispatches. Fill away the after-yards, sir! fill away. Since the *honorable* youth is disposed to amuse himself with a sailing-match, he can take no offense that others are in the same humor."

The lieutenant of the watch, to whom the order was addressed, complied; and, in another minute, the *Dart* was also beginning to move ahead, though in a direction directly opposite to that taken by the *Dolphin*. The old man highly enjoyed his own decision, manifesting his satisfaction by the infinite glee and deep chuckling of his manner. He was too much occupied with the step he had just taken to revert immediately to the subject that had so recently been uppermost in his mind; nor did the thought of pursuing the discourse occur to him until the two ships had left a broad field of water between them, as each moved with ease and steadiness on its proper course.

"Let him note that in his log-book, Mr. Ark," the irritated old seaman then resumed, returning to the spot which Wilder had not left during the intervening time. "Though my cook has no great relish for a frog, they who would taste of his skill must seek him. By the Lord, boy, he will have a pull of it, if he undertake to come-to on that tack. But how happens it you got into his ship? All that part of the cruise remains untold."

"I have been wrecked, sir, since you received my last letter."

"What! has Davy Jones got possession of the red gentleman at last?"

"The misfortune occurred in a ship from Bristol, aboard which I was placed as a sort of prize-master. He certainly continues to stand slowly to the northward."

"Let the young coxcomb go; he will have all the better appetite for his supper. And so you were picked up by his Majesty's ship the *Antelope*. Aye, I see the whole affair. Give an old sea-dog his course and compass, and he will find his way to port in the darkest night. But how happened it that this Mr. Howard affected to be ignorant of your name, sir, when he saw it on the list of my officers?"

"Ignorant! Did he seem ignorant? Perhaps——"

"Say no more, my brave fellow, say no more," interrupted Wilder's considerate but choleric commander. "I have met with such rebuffs myself; but we are above them, sir, far above them and their impertinence together. No man need be ashamed of having earned his commission, as you and I have done, in fair weather and in foul. Zounds, boy, I have fed one of the upstarts for a week, and then had him stare at a church across the way, when I have fallen in with him in the streets of London, in a manner to make a simple man believe the puppy knew for what it had been built. Think no more of it, Harry; worse things have happened to myself, I do assure you."

"I went by an assumed name while in his ship," Wilder forced himself to add. "Even the ladies, who were the companions of my wreck, knew me by no other."

"Ah! that was prudent; and, after all, the young sprig was not pretending genteel ignorance. How now, Mr. Fid! you are welcome back to the *Dart*."

"I have taken the liberty to say as much already to myself, your honor," resumed the topman, who was busying himself near his two officers, in a manner that seemed to invite their attention. "A wholesome craft is yonder, and boldly is she commanded, and stoutly is she manned; but, for my part, having a character to lose, it is more to my taste to sail in a ship that can show her

commission when properly called on for the same."

The color on Wilder's cheeks went and came, like the flushing of the evening sky, and his eyes were turned in every direction but that which would have encountered the astonished gaze of his veteran friend.

"I am not quite sure that I understand the meaning of the lad, Mr. Ark. Every officer, from the captain to the boatswain, in the King's fleet—that is, every man of common discretion—carries his authority to act as such with him to sea, or he might find himself in a situation as awkward as that of a pirate."

"That is what I said, sir; but schooling and long use have given your honor a better outfit in words. Guinea and I have often talked the matter over together, and serious thoughts has it given us both, more than once, Captain Bignall. 'Suppose,' says I to the black, 'suppose one of his Majesty's boats should happen to fall in with this here craft, and we should come to loggerheads and matches,' says I, 'what would the like of us two do in such a godsend?' 'Why,' says the black, 'we would stand to our guns on the side of Master Harry,' says he; nor did I gainsay the same; but, saving his presence and your honor's, I just took the liberty to add, that, in my poor opinion, it would be much more comfortable to be killed in an honest ship than on the deck of a buccaneer."

"A buccaneer!" exclaimed his commander, with eyes distended, and an open mouth.

"Captain Bignall," said Wilder, "I may have offended, past forgiveness, in remaining so long silent; but when you hear my tale, there may be found some passages that shall plead my apology. The vessel in sight is the ship of the renowned Red Rover; nay, listen, I conjure you, by all that kindness you have so long shown me, and then censure as you will."

The words of Wilder, aided, as they were, by an earnest and manly manner, laid a restraint on the mounting indignation of the choleric old seaman. He listened gravely and intently to the rapid but clear tale which his lieutenant hastened to recount; and, ere the latter had done, he had more than half entered into those grateful, and certainly generous feelings which had made the youth so reluctant to betray the obnoxious character of a man who had dealt so liberally by himself. A few strong, and what might be termed professional exclamations of surprise and admiration occasionally interrupted the narrative; but, on the whole, he curbed his impatience and his feelings, in a manner that was sufficiently remarkable, when the temperament of the individual is duly considered.

"This is wonderful indeed!" he exclaimed, as the other ended; "and a thousand pities is it that so honest a fellow should be so arrant a knave. But, Harry, we can never let him go at large, after all; our loyalty and our religion forbid it. We must take ship, and stand after him; if fair words won't bring him to reason, I see no other remedy than blows."

"I fear it is no more than our duty, sir," returned the young man, with a sigh.

"It is a matter of morals. And then the prating puppy that he sent on board me is no captain after all! Still it was impossible to deceive me as to the air and manner of a gentleman. I warrant me, some young reprobate of a good family, or he would never have acted the sprig so well. We must try to keep his name a secret, Mr. Ark, in order that no discredit should fall upon his friends. Our aristocratic columns, though they get a little cracked and defaced, are, after all, the pillars of the throne; and it does not become us to let vulgar eyes look closely into their unsoundness."

"The individual who visited the *Dart* was the Rover himself."

"Ha! the Red Rover in my ship—nay, in my very presence!" exclaimed the old tar, in honest horror. "You are now pleased, sir, to trifle with my good nature."

"I should forget a thousand obligations ere I could be so bold. On my solemn asseveration, sir, it was no other."

"This is unaccountable!—extraordinary to a miracle! His disguise was very complete, I will confess, to deceive one so well skilled in the human countenance. I saw nothing, sir, of his shaggy whiskers, heard nothing of his brutal voice, nor perceived any of those monstrous deformities which are universally acknowledged to distinguish the man."

"All of which are no more than the embellishments of vulgar rumor. I fear, sir, that the boldest and most dangerous of all our vices are often found under the most pleasing exteriors."

"But this is not even a man of inches, sir."

"His body is not large, but it contains the spirit of a giant."

"And do you believe yonder ship, Mr. Ark, to be the vessel that fought us in the equinox of March?"

"I know it to be no other."

"Hark ye, Harry, for your sake I will deal generously by the rogue. He once escaped me by the loss of topmast, and stress of weather; but we have here a good working breeze that a man may safely count on, and a fine regular sea. He is therefore mine, so soon as I choose to make him so; for, after all, I do not think he has any serious intention to run."

"I fear not," returned Wilder, unconsciously betraying his wishes in the words.

"Fight he cannot, with any hope of success; and, as he seems to be altogether a different sort of personage from what I had supposed, we will try the merits of negotiations. Will you undertake to be the bearer of my proposition? or, perhaps, he might repent of his moderation."

"I pledge myself for his faith," eagerly exclaimed Wilder. "Let a gun be fired to leeward. Mind, sir, all the tokens must be amicable—a flag of truce set at our main, and I will risk every hazard to lead him back into the bosom of society."

"By George, it would at least be acting a Christian part," returned the commander, after a moment's thought; "and, though we miss knighthood below, lad, for our success, there will be better berths cleared for us aloft."

No sooner had the warm-hearted, and perhaps a little visionary, captain of the *Dart*, and his lieutenant, determined on this measure, than they both eagerly set about the means of insuring its success. The helm of the ship was put a-lee; and, as her head came sweeping up into the wind, a sheet of flame flashed from her leeward bowport, sending the customary amicable intimation across the water, that those who governed her movements would communicate with the possessors of the vessel in sight. At the same instant, a small flag, with a spotless field, was seen floating at the topmost elevation of all her spars, while the flag of England was lowered from the gaff. A half minute of deep inquietude succeeded these signals. Their suspense, however, speedily terminated. A cloud of smoke issued from the vessel of the *Rover*, and then the smothered explosion of the answering gun came dull upon their ears. A flag, similar to their own, was seen floating, as it might be like a dove fanning its wing, far above her tops; but no emblem of any sort was borne at the spar where the colors which distinguish the national character of a cruiser are usually seen.

"The fellow has the modesty to carry a naked gaff in our presence," said Bignall, pointing out the circumstance to his companion, as an augury favorable to their success. "We will stand for him until within a reasonable distance, and then you shall take to the boat."

In conformity with this determination, the *Dart* was brought on the other tack, and several sails were set to quicken her speed. When at the distance of half-cannon shot, Wilder suggested to his superior the propriety of arresting their farther progress, in order to avoid the appearance of hostilities. The boat was immediately lowered into the sea, and manned; a flag of truce set in her bows; and the whole was reported ready to receive the bearer of the message.

"You may hand him this statement of our force, Mr. Ark; for, as he is a reasonable man, he will see the advantage it gives us," said the captain, after having exhausted his manifold and often-repeated

instructions, "I think you may promise him indemnity for the past, provided he comply with all my conditions; at all events, you will say that no influence shall be spared to get a complete whitewashing for himself at least. God bless you, boy! Take care to say nothing of the damages we received in the affair of March last; for—ay—for the equinox was blowing heavy at the time, you know. Adieu! and success attend you!"

The boat shoved off from the side of the vessel as he ended, and in a few moments the listening Wilder was borne beyond the sound of farther counsel.

Our adventurer had sufficient time to reflect on the extraordinary situation in which he now found himself during the row to the still distant ship. Once or twice, slight and uneasy glimmerings of distrust, concerning the prudence of the step he was taking, beset him; though a recollection of the lofty feeling of the man in whom he confided ever presented itself in sufficient season to prevent the apprehension from gaining any undue ascendency. Notwithstanding the delicacy of his situation, that characteristic interest in his profession which is rarely dormant in the bosom of a thoroughbred seaman was strongly stimulated as he approached the vessel of the Rover. The perfect symmetry of her spars, the graceful heavings and settings of the whole fabric, as it rode, like a marine bird, on the long, regular swells of the trades, and the graceful inclinations of the tapering masts, as they waved across the blue canopy, which was interlaced by all the tracery of her complicated tackle, was not lost on an eye that knew no less how to prize the order of the whole than to admire the beauty of the object itself.

There is a high and exquisite taste, which the seaman attains in the study of a machine that all have united to commend, which may be likened to the sensibilities that the artist acquires, by close and long contemplation of the noblest monuments of antiquity. It teaches him to detect those imperfections which would escape a less instructed eye; and it heightens the pleasure with which a ship at sea is gazed at, by enabling the mind to keep even pace with the enjoyment of the senses. It is this powerful (and to a landsman incomprehensible) charm that forms the secret tie which binds the mariner so closely to his vessel, and which often leads him to prize her qualities as one would esteem the virtues of a friend, and almost to be equally enamored of the fair proportions of his ship and those of his mistress. Other men may have their different inanimate subjects of admiration; but none of their feelings so thoroughly enter into the composition of the being as the affection which the mariner comes, in time, to feel for his vessel. It is his home, his tabernacle, and often his source of pride and exultation. As she gratifies or disappoints his high-wrought expectations, in her speed or in the fight, 'mid shoal and hurricanes, a character for good or luckless qualities is earned, which are as often in reality due to the skill or ignorance of those who guide her, as to any inherent properties of the fabric. Still does the ship itself, in the eyes of the seaman, bear away the laurel of success, or ignominy of defeat and misfortune; and, when the reverse arrives, the result is merely regarded as some extraordinary departure from the ordinary character of the vessel, as if the construction possessed the powers of self-command and volition.

Though not so deeply imbued with that superstitious credulity on this subject as the inferiors of his profession, Wilder was keenly awake to most of the sensibilities of the mariner. So strongly, indeed, was he alive to this feeling on the present occasion, that for a moment he forgot the critical nature of his errand, as he drew within plainer view of a vessel that, with justice, might lay claim to be a jewel of the ocean.

"Lay on your oars, lads," he said, signing to his people to arrest the progress of the boat; "lay on your oars! Did you ever see masts more beautifully in line than those, Master Fid, or sails that had a fairer fit?"

The topman, who rowed the stroke-oar of the pinnace, cast a look over his shoulder, and, stowing into one of his

cheeks a lump that resembled a wad laid by the side of its gun, he was not slow to answer.

"I care not who knows it," he said, "for, done by honest men or done by knaves, I told the people on the forecastle of the *Dart*, in the first five minutes after I got among them again, that they might be at Spithead a month, and not see hamper so light, and yet so handy, as is seen aboard that flyer. Her lower rigging is harpened in, like the waist of Nell Dale, after she has had a fresh pull upon her stay-lanyards, and there isn't a block among them all that seems bigger in its place than the eyes of the girl in her own good-looking countenance. The bit of a set that you see to her fore-brace-block was given by the hand of one Richard Fid; and the heart on her mainstay was turned in by Guinea, here; and, considering he is a nigger, I call it ship-shape."

"She is beautiful in every part!" said Wilder, drawing a long breath. "Give way, my men, give way! Do you think I have come here to take the soundings of the ocean?"

The crew started at the hurried tones of their lieutenant, and in another minute the boat was at the side of the vessel. The stern and threatening glances that Wilder encountered, as his foot touched the planks, caused him to pause an instant ere he advanced farther amid the crew; but the presence of the Rover himself, who stood, with his peculiar air of high imposing authority, on the counter-deck, encouraged him to proceed, after permitting a delay that was too slight to attract attention. His lips were in the act of parting, when a sign from the other induced him to remain silent until they were both in the privacy of the cabin.

"Suspicion is awake among my people, Mr. Ark," commenced the Rover, when they had retired, laying a marked emphasis on the name he used. "Suspicion is stirring, though, as yet, they hardly know what to credit. The maneuvers of the two ships have not been such as they are wont to see, and voices are not wanting to whisper in their ears matter that is somewhat injurious to your interests. You have not done well, sir, in returning among us."

"I came by the order of my superior, and under the sanction of a flag."

"We are small reasoners in the legal distinctions of the world, and may mistake your rights in so novel a character; but if you bear a message, I may presume it is intended for my ears."

"For no other. We are not alone, Captain Heidegger."

"Heed not the boy: he is deaf at my will."

"I could wish to communicate to you only the offers that I bear."

"That mast is not more senseless than Roderick," said the other calmly, but with decision.

"Then I must speak at every hazard. The commander of yonder ship, who bears the commission of our royal master, George the Second, has ordered me to say thus much for your consideration. On the condition that you will surrender this vessel, with her stores, armament, and warlike munitions, uninjured, he will content himself with taking ten hostages from your crew, to be decided by lot, yourself, and one other of your officers, and either to receive the remainder into the service of the King, or to suffer them to disperse in pursuit of a calling more creditable, and, as it would now appear, more safe."

"This is the liberality of a prince! I should kneel and kiss the deck before one whose lips utter such sounds of mercy!"

"I repeat but the words of my superior," Wilder resumed, coloring. "For yourself, he further promises, that his interest shall be exerted to procure a pardon, on condition that you quit the seas, and renounce the name of Englishman forever."

"The latter is done to his hands; but may I know the reason that such lenity is shown to one whose name has been so long proscribed by men?"

"Captain Bignall has heard of your generous treatment of his officer and the delicacy that the daughter and widow of two ancient brethren in arms have received at your hands. He confesses that

rumor has not done entire justice to your character."

A mighty effort kept down the gleam of exultation that flashed across the features of the Rover, who, however, succeeded in continuing entirely calm and immovable.

"He has been deceived, sir?" he resumed, as if to encourage the other to proceed.

"That much is he willing to acknowledge. A representation of this common error to the proper authorities will have weight in procuring the promised amnesty for the past, and, as he hopes, brighter prospects for the future."

"And does he urge no other motive than his pleasure why I should make this violent change in all my habits, why I should renounce an element that has become as necessary to me as the one I breathe, and why, in particular, I am to disclaim the vaunted privilege of calling myself a Briton?"

"He does. This statement of a force, which you may freely examine with your own eyes, if so disposed, must convince you of the hopelessness of resistance, and will, he thinks, induce you to accept his offers."

"And what is *your* opinion?" the other demanded, with a peculiar emphasis, as he extended a hand to receive the written statement. "But I beg pardon," he hastily added, taking the look of gravity from the countenance of his companion; "I trifle when the moment requires seriousness."

The eye of the Rover ran rapidly over the paper, resting once or twice, with a slight exhibition of interest, on particular points that seemed most to merit his attention.

"You find the superiority such as I had already given you reason to believe?" demanded Wilder, when the look of the other wandered from the paper.

"I do."

"And may I now ask your decision on the offer?"

"First tell me what does your own heart advise? This is but the language of another."

"Captain Heidegger," said Wilder, earnestly, "I will not attempt to conceal that, had this message depended solely on myself, it might have been couched in different terms; but as one who still deeply retains the recollection of your generosity, as a man who would not willingly induce even an enemy to an act of dishonor, I urge their acceptance. You will excuse me if I say, that, in our recent intercourse, I have had reason to believe you already realize that neither the character you could wish to earn, nor the content that all men crave, is to be found in your present career."

"I had not thought I entertained a casuist in Mr. Henry Wilder. Have you more to urge, sir?"

"Nothing," returned the disappointed and grieved messenger.

"Yes, yes, he has," said a low but eager voice at the elbow of the Rover, which rather seemed to breathe out the syllables than dare to utter them aloud: "he has not yet delivered the half of his commission, or sadly has he forgotten the sacred trust!"

"This boy is often a dreamer," interposed the Rover, smiling with a wild and haggard look. "He sometimes gives forms to his unmeaning thoughts, by clothing them in words."

"My thoughts are not unmeaning," continued Roderick, in a louder and bolder strain. "If his peace or happiness be dear to you, do not leave him. Tell him of his high and honorable name; of his youth; of that gentle and virtuous being that he once so fondly loved, and whose memory, even now, he worships. Speak to him of these, as you know how to speak; and, on my life, his ear will not be deaf, his heart cannot be callous, to your word."

"The urchin is mad!"

"I am not mad; or if maddened, it is by the crimes, the dangers, of those I love. O! Mr. Wilder, do not leave him. Since you have been among us, he is nearer to what I know he once was, than formerly. Take away that mistaken statement of your force; threats do but harm him. As a friend, admonish; but hope for nothing as a minister of vengeance. You know not the fearful nature of the man,

or you would not attempt to stop a torrent. Now—now speak to him; for his eye is already growing kinder."

"It is in pity, boy, at witnessing how thy reason wavers."

"Had it never swerved more than at this moment, Walter, another need not be called upon to speak between thee and me! My words would then have been regarded, my voice would then have been loud enough to be heard. Why are you dumb? a single happy syllable might now save him."

"Wilder, the child is frightened by this counting of guns and numbering of people. He fears the anger of your anointed master. Go; give him a place in your boat, and recommend him to the mercy of your superior."

"Away, away!" cried Roderick, "I shall not, will not, cannot leave you. Who is there left for me in this world but you?"

"Yes," continued the Rover, whose forced calmness of expression changed to one of melancholy musing; "it will indeed be better that he should go. See, here is much gold; you will commend him to the care of that admirable woman who already watches one scarcely less helpless, though possibly less——"

"Guilty! speak the word boldly, Walter. I have earned the epithet, and shall not shrink to hear it spoken. Look," he said, taking the ponderous bag, which had been extended toward Wilder, and holding it above his head, in scorn, "this can I cast from me; but the tie which binds me to thee shall never be broken."

As he spoke the lad approached an open window of the cabin; a plash upon the water was heard, and then a treasure that might have furnished a competence to moderate wishes was lost forever to the uses of man. The lieutenant of the *Dart* turned in haste to deprecate the anger of the Rover; but he could trace, in the features of the lawless chief, no other emotion than a pity which was discoverable even through his unmoved smile.

"Roderick would make but a faithless treasurer," he said. "Still, it is not too late to restore him to his friends. The loss of the gold can be repaired; but, should any serious calamity befall the boy, I might never regain a perfect peace of mind."

"Then keep him near yourself," murmured the lad, whose vehemence seemingly had expended itself. "Go, Mr. Wilder, your boat is waiting; a longer stay will be without an object."

"I fear it will!" returned our adventurer, who had not ceased, during the previous dialogue, to keep his look fastened, in manly commiseration, on the countenance of the boy; "I greatly fear it will! Since I have come the messenger of another, Captain Heidegger, it is your province to supply the answer to my proposition."

The Rover took him by the arm, and led him to a position whence they might look upon the outer scene. Pointing upward at his spars, and making his companion observe the small quantity of sail he carried, he simply said, "Sir, you are a seaman, and may judge of my intentions by this. I shall neither seek nor avoid your boasted cruiser."

CHAPTER XXX.

"Front to front,
Bring thou this fiend—
Within my sword's-length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!" —MACBETH.

"YOU have brought the grateful submission of the pirate!" exclaimed the sanguine commander of the *Dart*, as the foot of his messenger touched his deck.

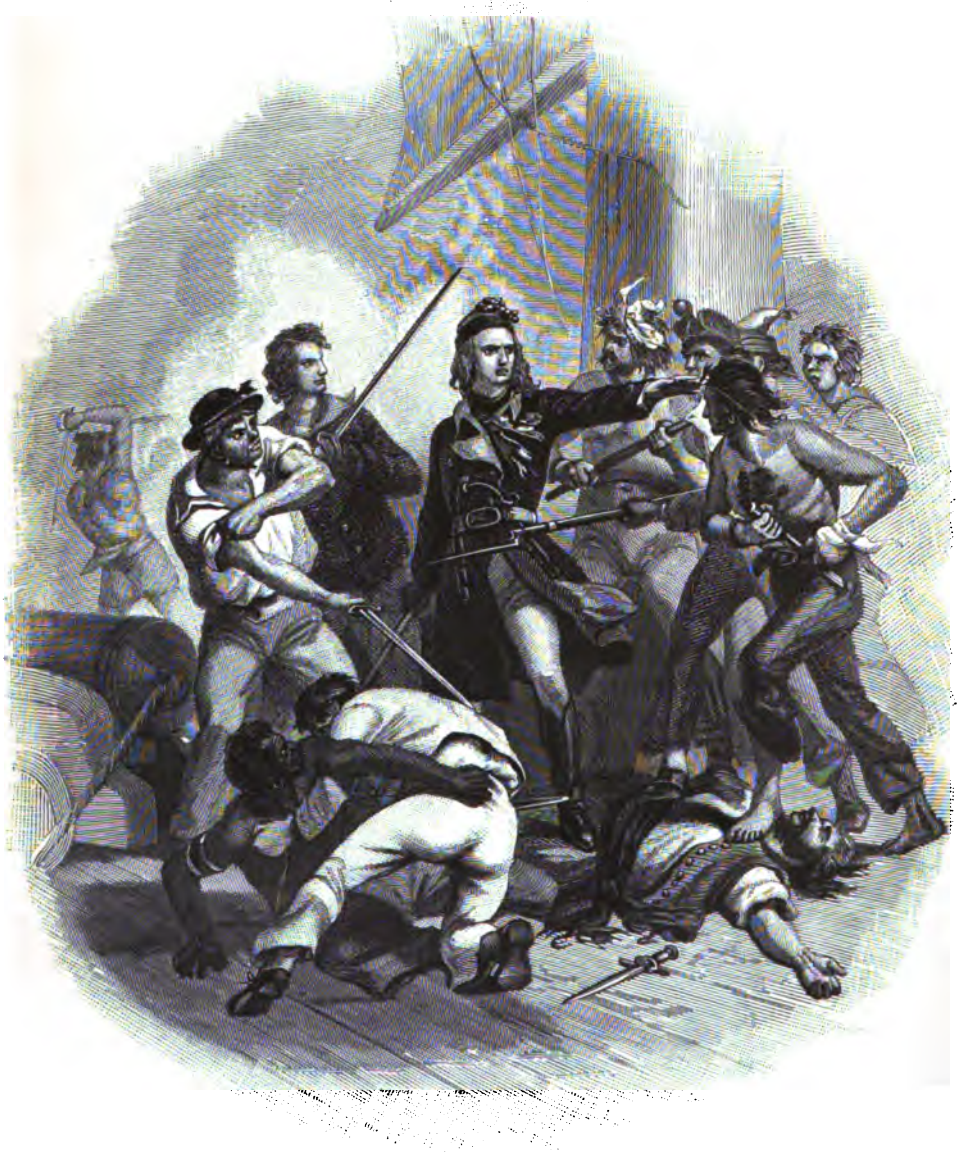
"I bring nothing but defiance!"

"Did you exhibit my statement? Surely, Mr. Ark, so material a document was not forgotten?"

"Nothing was forgotten that the warmest interest in his safety could suggest, Captain Bignall. Still, he refuses to hearken to your conditions."

"Perhaps, sir, he imagines that we are defective in some of our spars? He may hope to escape by pressing the canvas on his own light-heeled ship?"

"Does that look like flight?" demanded Wilder, extending an arm toward the



"Our work is done! He that strikes another blow makes an enemy of me."—*The Red Rover.*

nearly naked spars and motionless hull of their neighbor. "The utmost I can obtain is an assurance that he will not be the assailant."

"'Fore George, he is a merciful youth! and one that should be commended for moderation! He will not run his disorderly, picarooning company under the guns of a British man-of-war, because he owes a little reverence to the flag of his master! Hark ye, Mr. Ark, we will remember the circumstance when questioned at the Old Bailey. Send the people to their guns, sir, and wear the ship round, to put an end at once to this foolery, or we shall have him sending a boat aboard to examine our commissions."

"Captain Bignall," said Wilder, leading his commander still further from the ears of their inferiors, "I may lay some little claim to merit for service done under your own eyes, and in obedience to your orders. If my former conduct gives me any title to presume to counsel one of your great experience, suffer me to urge a short delay."

"Delay! Does Henry Ark hesitate, when the enemies of his King, nay more, the enemies of man, are daring him to his duty'?"

"Sir, you mistake me. I hesitate, in order that the flag under which we shall sail may be free from stain, and not with any intent of avoiding the combat. Our enemy, *my* enemy, knows that he has nothing now to expect for his past generosity but kindness, should he become our captive. Still, Captain Bignall, I ask for time to prepare the *Dart* for a conflict that will try all her powers, and to insure a victory that will not be bought without a price."

"But should he escape——"

"On my life, he will not attempt it. I not only know the man, but his formidable means of resistance. A half hour will put us in the necessary condition, and do no discredit either to our spirit or to our prudence."

The veteran yielded a reluctant consent, which was not, however, accorded without much muttering concerning the disgrace a British man-of-war incurred in not running alongside the boldest pirate that floated, and blowing him out of water with a single match. Wilder, who was accustomed to the honest professional bravadoes that often formed a peculiar embellishment to the really firm and manly resolution of the seaman of that age, permitted him to complain at will, while he busied himself in a manner that he knew was now of the last importance, and in a duty that properly came under his more immediate inspection.

The order for "all hands to clear ship for action" was again given, and received in the cheerful temper with which mariners are wont to welcome any of the more important changes of their exciting profession. Little remained, however, to be done, for most of the previous preparations had still been left, as at the original meeting of the two vessels. Then came the beat to quarters, and the more serious and fearful-looking preparations for certain combat. After these arrangements were completed, the crew at their guns, the sail-trimmers at the braces and the officers in their several batteries, the after-yards were swung, and the ship was once more put in motion.

During the brief interval, the vessel of the Rover lay, at the distance of half a mile, in a state of entire rest, without betraying the smallest interest in the obvious movements of her hostile neighbor. When, however, the *Dart* was seen yielding to the breeze, and gradually increasing her velocity, until the water was gathering under her forefoot in a little rolling wave of foam, the bows of the other fell off from the direction of the wind, the topsail was filled, and, in her turn, the hull was held in command by giving to it the impetus of motion. The *Dart* now set again at her gaff that broad field which had been lowered during the conference, and which had floated in triumph through the hazards and struggles of a thousand combats. No answering emblem, however, was exhibited from the peak of her adversary.

In this manner the two ships "gathered way," as it is expressed in nautical language, watching each other with eyes as

jealous as if they had been rival monsters of the great deep, each endeavoring to conceal from his antagonist the evolution he contemplated next. The earnest manner of Wilder had not failed to produce its influence on the straight-minded seaman who commanded the *Dart*, and, by this time, he was as much disposed as his lieutenant to approach the conflict leisurely, and with proper caution.

The day had hitherto been cloudless, and a vault of purer blue never canopied a waste of water than the arch which had stretched for hours above the heads of our marine adventurers. But, as if Nature frowned on their present bloody designs, a dark, threatening mass of vapor was blending the ocean with the sky, in a direction opposed to the currents of the air. These well-known and ominous signs did not escape the vigilance of those who manned the hostile ships, but the danger was deemed too remote to interrupt the higher interest of the approaching combat.

"We have a squall brewing in the west," said the experienced and wary Bignall, pointing to the dawning symptoms as he spoke; "but we can handle the pirate, and get all snug again, before it works its way up against this breeze."

Wilder assented; for, by this time, professional pride was swelling in his bosom also, and a generous rivalry was getting the mastery of feelings that were possibly foreign to his duty, however natural they might have been in one as open to goodness as himself.

"The Rover is even sending down all his lighter masts!" exclaimed the youth; "it would seem that he distrusts the weather."

"We will not follow his example; for he will wish they were aloft again, the moment we get him fairly under the play of our batteries. By George our King, but he has a pretty moving boat under him! Let fall the main course, sir; down with it, or we shall have it night before we get the rogue a-beam."

The order was obeyed, when the *Dart*, feeling the powerful impulse, quickened her speed, like an animated being that is freshly impelled by its apprehensions or its wishes. By this time, she had gained a position on the weather-quarter of her adversary, who had not manifested the smallest desire to prevent her attaining so material an advantage. On the contrary, while the *Dolphin* kept the same canvas spread, she continued to lighten her top hamper, bringing as much weight as possible from the towering height of her tall masts within the greater security of the hull. Still, the distance between them was too great, in the opinion of Bignall, to commence the contest, while the facility with which his adversary moved ahead threatened to protract the important moment to an unreasonable extent, or to reduce him to a crowd of sail that might prove embarrassing, while enveloped in the smoke, and pressed by the urgencies of the combat.

"We will touch his pride, sir, since you think him a man of spirit," said the veteran. "Give him a weather-gun, and show him another of his master's ensigns."

The roar of the piece, and the display of three more of the fields of England, in quick succession from different parts of the *Dart*, failed to produce the slightest evidence even of observation aboard their seemingly insensible neighbor. The *Dolphin* still kept on her way, occasionally swooping up to touch the wind, and then deviating from her course again to the leeward, as the porpoise is seen to turn aside from his direction to snuff the breeze, while he lazily sports along the briny path.

"He will not be moved by any of the devices of lawful and ordinary warfare," said Wilder, when he witnessed the indifference with which their challenge had been received. "Try him with shot."

A gun was now discharged from the side next the still receding *Dolphin*. The iron messenger was seen bounding along the surface of the sea, skipping lightly from wave to wave, until it cast a little cloud of spray upon the deck of their enemy, as it boomed harmlessly past her hull. Another, and yet another, followed, without in any manner extracting signal or notice from the Rover.

"How's this?" exclaimed the disappointed Bignall. "Has he a charm for his ship, that all our shot sweep over him in rain! Master Fid, can you do nothing for the credit of honest people and the honor of a pennant? Let us hear from your old favorite; in times past, she used to speak to a better purpose."

"Aye, aye, sir," returned the accommodating Richard, who, in the sudden turns of his fortune, found himself in authority over a much-loved and long-cherished piece. "I christened the gun after Mistress Whiffle, your honor, for the same reason that they both can do their own talking. Now, stand aside, my lads, and let clattering Kate have a word in the discourse."

Richard, who had coolly taken his sight while speaking, deliberately applied the match with his own hand, and, with a philosophy, sent what he boldly pronounced to be "a thorough straight goer" in the direction of his recent associates. The usual moments of suspense succeeded, and then the torn fragments which were scattered in the air announced that the shot had passed through the nettings of the *Dolphin*.

The effect on the vessel of the Rover was nearly magical. A long stripe of cream-colored canvas, which had been artfully extended from stem to stern, in a line with her guns, disappeared as suddenly as a bird would shut its wings, leaving in its place a broad, blood-red belt, that was bristling with the armament of the ship. At the same time, an ensign, of a similar ominous color, rose from her poop, and fluttering darkly and fiercely for a moment, it became fixed at the end of the gaff.

"Now I know him for the knave that he is!" cried the excited Bignall: "and see! he has thrown away his false paint, and shows the well-known bloody side from which he gets his name. Stand to your guns, my men! the pirate is getting to be in earnest."

He was still speaking, when a sheet of bright flame glanced from out that streak of red which was so well adapted to work upon the superstitious awe of the common mariners, and was followed by the simultaneous explosion of a dozen wide-mouthed pieces of artillery. The startling change from inattention and indifference to this act of bold and decided hostility produced a strong effect on the boldest heart on board the King's cruiser. The momentary interval of suspense was passed in unchanged attitudes and looks of breathless attention; and then the rushing of the iron storm was heard hurtling through the air, as it came fearfully on. The crash that followed, mingled as it was with human groans, and succeeded by the tearing of riven planks, and the scattering of splinters, ropes, blocks, and the implements of war, proclaimed the fatal accuracy of the broadside. But the surprise and the brief confusion endured but for an instant. The English shouted, sending back a return to the deadly assault they had just received, recovering manfully and promptly from the shock it had assuredly given.

The ordinary and more regular cannonading of a naval engagement succeeded. Anxious to precipitate the issue, both ships pressed nigher to each other the while, until in a few moments the two white canopies of smoke that were wreathing about their respective masts were blended in one, marking a solitary spot of strife, in the midst of a scene of broad and bright tranquillity. The discharges of the cannon were hot, close, and incessant. While the hostile parties, however, closely imitated each other in their zeal in dealing out destruction, a peculiar difference marked the distinction in character of the two crews. Loud, cheering shouts accompanied each discharge from the lawful cruiser, while the people of the *Rover* did their murderous work in the silence of desperation.

The spirit and uproar of the scene soon quickened that blood in the veins of the veteran Bignall which had begun to circulate a little slowly by time.

"That fellow has not forgotten his art!" he exclaimed, as the effects of his enemy's skill were getting to be but too manifest in the rent sails, shivered spars, and tottering masts of his own ship.

"Had he but the commission of the King in his pocket, one might call him a hero!"

The emergency was too urgent to throw away the time in words. Wilder answered only by cheering his own people to their fierce and laborious task. The ships had now fallen off before the wind, and were running parallel to each other, emitting sheets of flame that were incessantly glancing through immense volumes of smoke. The spars of the respective vessels were alone visible, at brief and uncertain intervals. Many minutes had thus passed, seeming to those engaged but a moment of time, when the mariners of the *Dart* found that they no longer held their vessel in the quick command so necessary to their situation. The important circumstance was instantly conveyed from the master to Wilder, and from Wilder to his superior. A hasty consultation on the cause and consequences of this unexpected event was the immediate and natural result.

"See!" cried Wilder, "the sails are already hanging against the masts like rags; the explosions of the artillery have stilled the wind."

"Hark!" answered the more experienced Bignall; "there goes the artillery of Heaven among our own guns. The squall is already upon us—port the helm, sir, and sheer the ship out of the smoke! Hard-a-port with the helm, sir, at once! hard with it a-port, I say!"

But the lazy motion of the vessel did not answer to the impatience of those who directed her movements, nor did it meet the pressing exigencies of the moment. In the meantime, while Bignall and the officers whose duties kept them near his person, assisted by the sail-trimmers, were thus occupied, the people in the batteries continued their murderous employment. The roar of cannon was incessant, and nearly overwhelming, though there were instants when the ominous mutterings of the atmosphere were too distinctly audible to be mistaken. Still the eye could lend no assistance to the hearing in determining the judgment of the mariners. Hulls, spars, and sails were alike enveloped in the curling wreaths which wrapped heaven, air, vessels, and ocean alike, in one white, obscure, foggy mantle. Even the persons of the crew were merely seen at instants laboring at the guns through brief and varying openings.

"I never knew the smoke pack so heavy on the deck of a ship before," said Bignall, with a concern that even his caution could not entirely repress. "Keep the helm a-port—jam it hard, sir! By Heaven, Mr. Wilder, those knaves well know they are struggling for their lives!"

"The fight is all our own!" shouted the second lieutenant, from among the guns, stanching, as he spoke, the blood of a severe splinter-wound in the face, and far too intent on his own immediate occupation to notice the signs of the weather. "He has not answered with a single gun for near a minute."

"'Fore George the rogues have enough!" exclaimed the delighted Bignall. "Three cheers for vic——"

"Hold, sir!" interrupted Wilder, with a sufficient decision to check his commander's premature exultation; "on my life, our work is not so soon ended. I think, indeed, his guns are silent; but see! the smoke is beginning to lift. In a few more minutes, if our fire should cease, the view will be clear."

A shout from the men in the batteries interrupted his words; and then came a general cry that the pirates were sheering off. The exultation at this fancied evidence of their superiority was, however, soon and fearfully interrupted. A bright vivid flash penetrated through the dense vapor which still hung about them in an extraordinary manner, and was followed by a crash from the heavens, to which the simultaneous explosion of fifty pieces of artillery would have sounded feeble.

"Call the people from their guns!" said Bignall, in those suppressed tones that are only more portentous from their forced and unnatural calmness; "call them away at once, sir, and get the canvas in!"

Wilder, startled more at the proximity and apparent weight of the squall than at words to which he had long been accus-

tomed, delayed not to give an order that was so urgent. The men left their batteries, like athletæ retiring from the arena, some bleeding and faint, some fierce and angry, and all more or less excited by the furious scene in which they had just been actors. Many sprang to the well-known ropes, while others, as they ascended into the cloud which still hung on the vessel, became lost to the eye in her rigging.

"Shall I reef or furl?" demanded Wilder, standing with the trumpet at his lips, ready to issue the necessary order.

"Hold, sir; another minute will give us an opening."

The lieutenant paused; for he was not slow to see that now, indeed, the veil was about to be drawn from their real situation. The smoke, which had lain upon their very decks, pressed down by the superincumbent weight of the atmosphere, first began to stir; was then seen eddying among the masts; and, finally, whirled wildly away before a strong current of air. The view was, indeed, now all before them.

In place of the glorious sun, and that bright, blue canopy which had lain above them a short half-hour before, the heavens were clothed in one immense black veil. The sea reflected the portentous color, looking dark and angrily, the waves had already lost their regular rise and fall, and were tossing to and fro, awaiting the power that was to give them direction and force.

The flashes from the heavens were not in quick succession; but the few that did break upon the gloominess of the scene came with majesty and with dazzling brightness. They were accompanied by the terrific thunder of the tropics, in which it is scarcely profanation to fancy that the voice of One who made the universe is actually speaking to the creatures of his hand. On every side was the appearance of a fierce and dangerous struggle in the elements. The vessel of the Rover was running lightly before the breeze, which had already come fresh and fitful from the cloud, with her sails reduced, and her people coolly, but actively employed in repairing the damages of the fight.

Not a moment was to be lost in imitating the example of the wary freebooters. The head of the *Dart* was hastily, and happily, got in a direction contrary to the breeze; and as she began to follow the course taken by the *Dolphin*, an attempt was made to gather her torn and nearly useless canvas to the yards. But precious minutes had been lost in the smoky canopy that might never be regained. The sea changed its color from a dark green to a glittering white; and then the fury of the gust was heard rushing fearfully along the water, and with a violence that could not be resisted.

"Be lively, men!" shouted Bignall himself in the exigency in which his vessel was placed; "roll up the cloth; in with it all—leave not a rag to the squall! 'Fore George, Mr. Wilder, but this wind is not playing with us; cheer the men to their work; speak to them cheerily, sir!"

"Furl away!" shouted Wilder. "Cut, if too late; work away with knives and teeth—down, every man of you, down—down for your lives, all!"

There was an energy in the voice of the lieutenant which sounded supernatural in the ears of his people. He had so recently witnessed a calamity similar to that which again threatened him, that his feelings lent horror to the tones. A score of forms descended swiftly through an atmosphere that appeared sensible to the touch. Nor was their escape, which might be likened to the stopping of birds that dart into their nest, too earnestly pressed. Stripped of its rigging, and already tottering under numerous wounds, the lofty and overloaded spars yielded to the mighty force of the squall, tumbling in succession toward the hull, until nothing stood but the three firmer, but shorn, and nearly useless lower masts. By far the greater number of those aloft reached the deck in time to insure their safety, though some there were too stubborn, and still too much under the sullen influence of the combat, to hearken to the words of warning. These victims of their own obstinacy were seen clinging to the broken fragments of the spars, as the *Dart*, in a cloud of foam, drove away from the spot where they floated, until

their persons and their misery were alike swallowed in the distance.

"It is the hand of God!" hoarsely exclaimed the veteran Bignall, while his eye drank in the destruction of the wreck. "Mark me, Henry Ark; I will forever testify that the guns of the pirate have not brought us to this condition."

Little disposed to seek the same miserable consolation as his commander, Wilder exerted himself in counteracting, as far as circumstances would allow, an injury that he felt, however, at that moment to be irreparable. Amid the howling of the gust, and the fearful crashing of the thunder, with an atmosphere now lurid with the glare of lightning, and now nearly obscured by the dark canopy of vapor, and with all the frightful evidences of the fight still reeking and ghastly before their eyes, did the men of the British cruiser prove true to themselves and to their ancient reputation. The voices of Bignall and his subordinates were heard in the tempest, uttering those mandates which long experience had rendered familiar, or encouraging their people to their duty. Happily the strife of the elements was of short continuance. The squall soon swept over the spot, leaving the currents of the trade returning into their former channels, and a sea that was rather stilled than agitated by the counteracting influence of the wind.

But, as one danger passed away from before the eyes of the mariners of the *Dart*, another, scarcely less to be apprehended, forced itself upon their attention.

All recollection of the favors of the past, and every feeling of gratitude, was banished from the mind of Wilder by the mountings of professional pride, and that love of glory which becomes inherent in the warrior, as he gazed on the untouched and beautiful symmetry of the *Dolphin's* spars, and all the perfect and unharmed order of her tackle. It seemed as if she bore a charmed fate, or that some supernatural agency had been instrumental in preserving her amid the violence of a second hurricane. But cooler thought, and more impartial reflection, compelled the internal acknowledgment, that the vigilance and wise precautions of the remarkable individual who appeared not only to govern her movements, but to control her fortunes, had their proper influence in producing the result.

Little leisure, however, was allowed to ruminate on these changes, or to deprecate the advantage of their enemy. The vessel of the Rover had already opened many broad sheets of canvas; and, as the return of the regular breeze gave her the wind, her approach was rapid and unavoidable.

"'Fore George, Mr. Ark, luck is all on the dishonest side to-day," said the veteran, when he perceived, by the direction which the *Dolphin* took, that the encounter was likely to be renewed. "Send the people to quarters again, and clear away the guns; we are likely to have another bout with the rogues."

"I would advise a moment's delay," Wilder earnestly observed, when he heard his commander issuing an order to his people to prepare to deliver their fire, the instant their enemy should come within a favorable position. "Let me entreat you to delay; we know not what may be his present intentions."

"None shall put foot on deck of the *Dart*, without submitting to the authority of her royal master," returned the stern old tar. "Give it to him, my men! Scatter the rogues from their guns! Let them know the danger of approaching a lion, though he should be crippled!"

Wilder saw that remonstrance was too late; for a fresh broadside was hurled from the *Dart*, to defeat any generous intentions that the Rover might entertain. The ship of the latter received the iron storm while advancing, and immediately deviated from her course in such a way as to prevent its repetition. Then she was seen sweeping toward the bows of the nearly helpless cruiser of the King, and a hoarse summons was heard ordering her ensign to be lowered.

"Come on, ye villains!" shouted the excited Bignall. "Come and perform the office with your own hands!"

The graceful ship, as if sensible herself to the taunts of her enemy, sprang nigher

to the wind, and shooting across the forefoot of the *Dart*, delivered her fire, gun after gun, with deliberate and deadly accuracy, full into that defenseless portion of her antagonist. A crush like that of meeting bodies followed, when fifty grim visages were seen entering the scene of carnage, armed with the deadly weapons of personal conflict. The shock of so close and so fatal a discharge had, for the moment, paralyzed the efforts of the assailed; but no sooner did Bignall and his lieutenant see the dark forms that issued from the smoke on their own decks, than, with voices that had not even lost their authority, each summoned a band of followers, backed by whom they bravely dashed into opposite gangways of their ships, to stay the torrent. The first encounter was fierce and fatal, both parties receding a little, to wait for succor and recover breath.

"Come on, ye murderous thieves!" cried the dauntless veteran, who stood foremost in his own band, conspicuous by the gray locks that floated around his naked head, "well do ye know that Heaven is with the right!"

The grim freebooters in his front recoiled and opened; then came a sheet of flame, from the side of the *Dolphin*, through an empty port of her adversary, bearing in its center a hundred deadly missiles. The sword of Bignall was flourished furiously and wildly above his head, and his voice was still heard shouting, till utterance failed him—

"Come on, ye knaves! come on!" he cried. "Harry Ark! O God!—Hurrah!"

He fell like a dog, and died the unwitting owner of that very commission for which he had toiled throughout a life of hardship and danger.

Until now, Wilder had made good his quarter of the deck, though pressed by a band as fierce and daring as his own; but at this fearful crisis in the combat a voice was heard in the *melee* that thrilled on all his own nerves, seeming even to carry its fearful influence over the minds of his men.

"Make way there, make way!" it said, in tones clear, deep, and breathing with authority, "make way, and follow, no hand but mine shall lower that vaunting flag!"

"Stand to your faith, my men!" shouted Wilder, in reply. Shouts, oaths, imprecations, and groans, formed a fearful accompaniment of the rude encounter, which was, however, too violent to continue long. Wilder saw, with agony, that numbers and impetuosity were sweeping his supporters from around him. Again and again he called them to the succor with his voice, or stimulated them to daring by his example.

Friend after friend fell at his feet, until he was driven to the utmost extremity of the deck. Here he again rallied a little band, against which several charges were made in vain.

"Ha!" exclaimed a voice he well knew; "death to all traitors! Spit the spy as you would a dog! Charge through them, my bullies; a halbert to the hero that shall reach his heart."

"Avast, ye lubbers!" returned the stanch Richard. "Here are a white man and a negro at your service, if you've need of a spit."

"Two more of the gang!" continued the General, aiming a blow that threatened to immolate the topman as he spoke.

A dark, half-naked form was interposed to receive the descending blade, which feel on the staff of a half-pike, severing it as if it were a reed. Nothing daunted by the defenseless state in which he found himself, Scipio made his way to the front of Wilder, where, with a body divested to the waist of every garment, and empty-handed, he fought with his brawny arms, like one who despised the cuts, thrusts, and insults, of which his athletic frame became the helpless object.

"Give it to 'em, right and left, Guinea," cried Fid; "here is one who will come in as a backer, as soon as he has stopped the grog of the marine."

The parries and science of the unfortunate General were at this moment set at naught by a blow from Richard, which broke down all his defenses, descending through cap and skull to the jaw.

"Hold, murderers!" cried Wilder, who saw the numberless blows that were falling on the defenseless body of the still undaunted black. "Strike here! but spare an unarmed man!"

The sight of our adventurer became confused, for he saw the negro fall, dragging with him to the deck two of his assailants; and then a voice, deep as the emotion which such a scene might create, uttered in the very portals of his ear—

"Our work is done. He that strikes another blow makes an enemy of me."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Take him hence!
The whole world shall not save him."
—CYMBELINE.

THE recent gust had not passed more fearfully and suddenly over the ship than the scene just related; but the smiling aspect of the tranquil sky, and the bright sun of a Caribbean sea, found no parallel in the horrors that succeeded the combat. The momentary confusion which accompanied the fall of Scipio soon disappeared, and Wilder was left to gaze on the wreck of all the boasted powers of his cruiser, and on that waste of human life which had been the attendants of the struggle. The former has already been sufficiently described; but a short account of the present state of the actors may serve to elucidate the events that are to follow.

Within a few yards of the place he was permitted to occupy himself, stood the motionless form of the Rover. A second glance was necessary, however, to recognize, in the grim visage to which the boarding cap already mentioned lent a look of artificial ferocity, the usually bland countenance of the man. As the eye of Wilder roamed over the swelling, erect, and triumphant figure, it was difficult not to fancy that even the stature had been suddenly and unaccountably increased. One hand rested on the hilt of a yataghan, which, by the crimson drops that flowed along its curved blade, had evidently done fatal service in the fray; and one foot was placed, seemingly with supernatural weight, on that national emblem which it had been his pride to lower. His eye was wandering sternly, but understandingly, over the scene, though he spoke not, nor in any other manner betrayed the deep interest he felt in the past. At his side, and nearly within the circle of his arm, stood the cowering form of the boy, Roderick, unprovided with weapon, his garments sprinkled with blood, his eye contracted, wild, and fearful, and his face pallid as those in whom the tide of life had just ceased to circulate.

Here and there were to be seen the wounded captives, still sullen and unconquered in spirit, while many of their less fortunate enemies lay in their blood, around the deck, with such gleamings of ferocity on their countenances as plainly denoted that the current of their meditations was still running on vengeance. The uninjured and the slightly wounded of both bands were already pursuing their different objects of plunder or of secretion.

But so thorough was the discipline established by the leader of the freebooters, so absolute his power, that a blow had not been struck, or blood drawn, since the moment his prohibitory mandate was heard. There had been enough of destruction, however, to satisfy the most gluttonous longings, had human life been the sole object of the assault. Wilder felt many a pang, as the marble-like features of some humble friend or faithful servitor came, one after another, under his recognition; but the shock was the greatest when his eye fell upon the rigid and still frowning countenance of his veteran commander.

"Captain Heidegger," he said, struggling to maintain the fortitude which became the moment; "the fortune of the day is yours; I ask mercy and kindness for the survivors."

"They shall be granted to those who, of right, may claim them; I hope it may be found that all are included in this promise."

The voice of the Rover was solemn and full of meaning; it appeared to convey more than the simple import of the words. Wilder might have mused long and vainly,

however, on the equivocal manner in which he had been answered, had not the approach of a body of the hostile crew, among whom he instantly recognized the most prominent of the late mutineers of the *Dolphin*, speedily supplied a clew to the hidden meaning of their leader.

"We claim the execution of our ancient laws!" commanded the foremost of the gang, addressing his chief with a brevity and fierceness which the late combat might have generated, if not excused.

"What would you have?"

"The lives of traitors!" was the sullen answer.

"You know the condition of our service. If any such are in our power, let them meet their fate."

Had any doubt remained in the mind of Wilder as to the meaning of these terrible claimants of justice, it would have vanished at the manner with which he and his two companions were immediately dragged before the lawless chief. Though the love of life was strong and active in his breast, it was not, even in that fearful moment, exhibited in a deprecating or unmanly form. Nor for an instant did his mind waver, or his thoughts wander to any subterfuge that might prove unworthy of his profession, or of his formal character. One anxious, inquiring look was fastened on the eye of him whose power alone could save him. He witnessed the short, severe struggle that softened the rigid muscles of the Rover's countenance; and then he saw the instant, cold, and calm composure which settled on every one of its disciplined lineaments. He knew at once that the feelings of the man were smothered in the duty of the chief, and more was unnecessary to teach him the hopelessness of his condition. Scorning to render his state degrading by useless remonstrances, the youth remained where his accusers had seen fit to place him—firm, motionless, and silent.

"What would ye have?" the Rover at length asked, in a voice that even his iron nerves scarce rendered deep, full-toned as common. "What ask ye?"

"Their lives!"

"I understand you; go; they are at your mercy."

Notwithstanding the horrors of the scene through which he had just passed, and the high excitement which had sustained him through the fight, the deliberate, solemn tones with which his judge delivered a sentence that he knew consigned him to a hasty and ignominious death, shook the frame of our adventurer nearly to insensibility. The blood recoiled backward to his heart, and the sickening sensation that beset his brain threatened to upset his reason. But the shock passed, on the instant, leaving him erect, and seemingly firm as ever, and certainly with no evidence of mortal weakness that human eye could discover.

"For myself, nothing is demanded," he said with admirable steadiness. "I know your self-enacted laws condemn me to a miserable fate; but for these ignorant, confiding, faithful followers, I claim, nay, beg, entreat, implore your mercy; they knew not what they did, and——"

"Speak to these," said the Rover, pointing with an averted eye to the fierce knot by which he was surrounded; "these are your judges' and the sole ministers of mercy."

Strong and nearly unconquerable disgust was apparent in the manner of the youth; with a mighty effort he subdued it, and, turning to the crew, continued—

"Then even to these will I humble myself in petitions. Ye are men, and ye are mariners——"

"Away with him!" exclaimed the croaking Nightingale; "he preaches! Away with him to the yardarm—away!"

The shrill, long-drawn winding of the call, which the callous boatswain sounded in mockery, was answered by an echo from twenty voices, in which the accents of nearly as many different people mingled in hoarse discordancy, each shouting in turn—

"To the yardarm! Away with the three!—away!"

Wilder made a last appeal to the Rover with his eye, but he met no look in return, the face of the other being intention-

ally averted. With a burning brain, he felt himself rudely transferred from the quarter-deck into the center and less privileged portion of the ship. The violence of the passage, the hurried reeving of cords, and all the fearful preparations of a nautical execution, appeared but the business of a moment to one who stood so near the verge of time.

"A yellow flag for punishment!" bawled the revengeful captain of the forecastle; "let the gentleman sail on his last cruise under the rogue's ensign!"

"A yellow flag! a yellow flag!" echoed twenty brawling throats. "Down with the Rover's ensign, and up with the colors of the Provost-marshal! A yellow flag! a yellow flag!"

The hoarse laughter and mocking merriment with which this coarse device was received, stirred the ire of Fid, who had submitted in silence so far to the rude treatment he received, for no other reason than that he thought his superior was the best qualified to utter the little which it might be necessary to say.

"Avast, ye villains!" he hotly exclaimed, prudence and moderation losing their influence under the excitement of anger; "ye cut-throat, lubberly villains! That ye are villains, is to be proved in your teeth, by your getting your sailing orders from the devil; and that ye are lubbers, any man may see by the fashion in which ye have rove this cord about my throat. A fine jam will ye make with a turn in your whip! But ye'll all come to know how a man is to be decently hanged, ye rogues, ye will!"

"Clear the turn, and run him up!" shouted one, two, three voices, in hurried succession; "a clear whip, and a swift run to heaven!"

Happily, a fresh burst of riotous clamor from one of the hatchways interrupted the intention; and then was heard the cry of—

"A priest! a priest! Pipe the rogues to prayers before they take their dance on nothing!"

The ferocious laughter with which the freebooters received this sneering proposal, was hushed as suddenly as if One answered to their mockery from that mercy-seat whose power they so sacrilegiously braved. A deep, menacing voice was heard in their midst, saying—

"By Heaven, if touch, or look, be laid too boldly on prisoner in this ship, he who offends had better beg the fate ye give these miserable men, than meet my anger. Stand off, I bid you, and let the chaplain approach!"

Every bold hand was instantly withdrawn, and each profane lip was closed in trembling silence, giving the terrified and horror-stricken subject of their liberties room and opportunity to advance to the scene of punishment.

"See," said the Rover calmly, but still with authority, "you are a minister of God, and your office is sacred charity. If you have aught to smooth the dying moment to fellow-mortal, haste to impart it."

"In what have these offended?" demanded the divine, when power was given to speak.

"No matter; it is enough that their hour is near! If you would lift your voice in prayer, fear nothing. The unusual sounds shall be welcome even here. Aye, and these miscreants, who so boldly surround you, shall kneel and be mute, as beings whose souls are touched by the holy rite. Scoffers shall be dumb, and unbelievers respectful at my beck. Speak freely!"

"Scourge of the seas!" commenced the chaplain, across whose pallid features a flash of holy excitement cast its glow, "remorseless violator of the laws of man! audacious contemner of the mandates of your God! a fearful retribution shall avenge this crime. Is it not enough that you have this day consigned so many to a sudden end, but your vengeance must be glutted with more blood? Beware of the hour when these things shall be visited, in almighty power, on your own devoted head!"

"Look!" said the Rover, smiling, but with an expression that was haggard, in spite of the unnatural exultation that struggled about his quivering lip; "here

are the evidences of the manner in which Heaven protects the right!"

"Though its awful justice be hidden in inscrutable wisdom, for a time, deceive not thyself; the hour is at hand when it shall be seen and felt in majesty!" The voice of the chaplain became suddenly choked; for his wandering eye had fallen on the frowning countenance of Bignall, which, set in death, lay but half concealed beneath a flag which the Rover himself had cast on the body. Then, summoning his energies, he continued in the clear and admonitory strain that befitted his sacred calling: "They tell me you are but half lost to feeling for your kind; and, though the seeds of better principles, of better days are smothered in your heart, that they still exist, and might be quickened into goodly——"

"Peace! You speak in vain. To your duty with these men, or be silent."

"Is their doom sealed?"

"It is."

"Who says it?" demanded a low voice at the elbow of the Rover, which, coming upon his ear at that moment, thrilled upon his most latent nerve, chasing the blood from his cheek to the secret recesses of his frame. But the weakness passed away with the surprise, and he calmly and almost instantly answered—

"The law."

"The law!" repeated the governess. "Can they who set all law at defiance, who despise each human regulation, talk of law? Say it is heartless, vindictive vengeance, if you will; but call it not by the sacred name of law. I wander from my object! They have told me of this frightful scene, and I am come to offer ransom for the offenders. Name your price, and let it be worthy of the subject we redeem; a grateful parent shall freely give it all for the preserver of his child."

"If gold will purchase the lives you wish," the other interrupted, with the swiftness of thought, "it is here in hoards, and ready on the moment. What say my people? Will they take ransom?"

A brooding pause succeeded; and then a low, ominous murmur was raised in the throng, announcing their reluctance to dispense with vengeance. The glowing eye of the Rover scanned the fierce contenances by which he was environed; his lips moved with vehemence; but, disdaining further intercession, nothing was uttered for the ear. Turning to the divine, he added, with the forced composure of his wonderful manner—

"Forget not your sacred office—time is leaving us." He was then moving slowly aside, in imitation of the governess, who had already veiled her features from the revolting scene, when Wilder addressed him.

"For the service you would have done me, from my soul I thank you," he said. "If you would know that I leave you in peace, give me yet one solemn assurance before I die."

"To what?"

"Promise that they who came with me into your ship shall leave it unharmed, and speedily."

"Promise, Walter," said a solemn, smothered voice in the throng.

"I do."

"I ask no more. Now, reverend minister of God, perform thy holy office, near my companions. Their ignorance may profit by your service. If I quit this bright and glorious scene without thought of and gratitude to that Being who, I humbly trust, has made me an heritor of still greater things, I offend willingly and without hope. But these may find consolation in your prayers."

Amid an awful silence, the chaplain approached the devoted companions of Wilder. Their comparative insignificance had left them unobserved during most of the foregoing scene, and material changes had occurred, unheeded, in their situation. Fid was seated on the deck, his collar unbuttoned, his neck encircled with the cord, sustaining the head of the nearly helpless black, which he had placed, with singular tenderness and care, in his lap.

"This man, at least, will disappoint the malice of his enemies," said the divine, taking the hard hand of the negro into his own. "The termination of his wrongs and his degradation approaches;

he will soon be far beyond the reach of human injustice. Friend, by what name is your companion known?"

"It is little matter how you hail a dying man," returned Richard, with a melancholy shake of the head. "He has commonly been entered on the ship's books as Scipio Africa, coming, as he did, from the coast of Guinea; but, if you call him S'ip, he will not be slow to understand."

"Has he known baptism? Is he a Christian?"

"If he be not, I don't know who the devil is!" responded Richard, with an asperity that might be deemed a little unseasonable. "A man who serves his country, is true to his messmate, and has no skulk about him, I call a saint, so far as mere religion goes. I say, Guinea, my hearty, give the chaplain a grip of the fist, if you call yourself a Christian. A Spanish windlass would not give a stronger screw than the knuckles of that nigger an hour ago; and now you see to what a giant may be brought!"

"His latter moment is, indeed, near. Shall I offer a prayer for the health of the departing spirit?"

"I don't know, I don't know!" answered Fid, gulping his words, and uttering a hem, that was still deep and powerful, as in the brightest and happiest of his days. "When there is so little time given to a poor fellow to speak his mind in, it may be well to let him have a chance to do most of the talking. Something may come uppermost, which he would like to send to his friends in Africa; in which case he may as well be looking out for a proper messenger. Hah! what is it, boy? You see he is already trying to rouse something up out of his ideas."

"Misser Fid—he'm take a collar," said the black, struggling for utterance.

"Aye, aye," returned Richard, again clearing his throat, and looking to the right and left fiercely, seeking some object on which to wreak his vengeance. "Aye, aye, Guinea; put your mind at ease on that point, my hearty, and, for that matter, on all others. You shall have a grave as deep as the sea, and Christian burial, boy, if this here parson will stand by his work. Any small message you may have for your friends shall be logged, and put in the way of coming to their ears. You have had much foul weather in your time, Guinea, and some squalls have whistled about your head that might have been spared, mayhap, had your color been a shade or two lighter. For that matter it may be that I rode you down a little too close myself, boy, when overheated with the conceit of the skin; for all which may the Lord forgive me as I hope you will do the same thing!"

The negro made a fruitless effort to rise, endeavoring to grasp the hand of the other, saying as he did so:

"Misser Fid beg a pardon of a black man! Masser aloft forget he'm all, Misser Richard; he t'ink 'em no more."

"It will be what I call a d——d generous thing, if he does," returned Richard, whose sorrow and whose conscience had stirred up his uncouth feeling to an extraordinary degree. "There's the affair of slipping off the wreck of the smuggler has never been properly settled atween us, neither; and many other small services of like nature, for which d'ye see I'll just thank ye while there is opportunity; for no one can say whether we shall ever be borne again on the same ship's books."

A feeble sign from his companion caused the topman to pause, while he endeavored to construe its meaning as well as he was able. With a facility that was in some degree owing to the character of the individual, his construction of the other's meaning was favorable to himself, as was quite evident by the manner in which he resumed.

"Well, well, mayhap we may. I suppose they berth the people there in some such order as is done here below, in which case we may be put within sailing distance after all. Our sailing orders are both signed; though, as you seem likely to slip your cable before these thieves are ready to run me up, you will be getting the best of the wind. I shall not say much concerning any signals it may be necessary to show, in order to make one another out aloft, taking it for granted that you will

not overlook Master Harry on account of the small advantage you may have in being the first to shove off, intending myself to keep as close as possible in his wake, which will give me the twofold advantage of knowing I am on the right track, and of falling in with you."

"These are evil words, and fatal alike to your own future peace, and to that of your unfortunate friend," interrupted the divine. "His reliance must be placed on One, different in all his attributes from your officer, to follow whom, or to consult whose frail conduct, would be the height of madness. Place your faith on another——"

"If I do, may I be——"

"Peace!" said Wilder; "the black would speak to me."

Scipio had turned his looks in the direction of his officer, and was making another feeble effort toward extending his hand. As Wilder placed his own within the grasp of that of the dying negro, the latter succeeded in laying it on his lips, and then, flourishing with a convulsive movement that Herculean arm which he had so lately and so successfully brandished in defense of his master, the limb stiffened and fell, though the eyes still continued their affectionate and glaring gaze on that countenance he had so long loved, and which, in the midst of all his long-endured wrongs, had never refused to meet his look of love and kindness. A low murmur followed this scene, and then complaints succeeded, in a louder strain, till more than one voice was heard openly muttering its discontent that vengeance should be so long delayed.

"Away with them!" shouted an ill-omened voice from the throng. "Into the sea with the carcass, and up with the living."

"Avast!" burst out of the chest of Fid, with an awfulness and depth that stayed even the daring movements of that lawless moment. "Who dare to cast a seaman into the brine, with the dying look standing in his lights and his last words still in his messmate's ears? Ha! would ye stopper the fins of a man as ye would pin a lobster's claw? That for your fastenings and your lubberly knots together!" The excited topman snapped the lines by which his elbows had been imperfectly secured while speaking, and immediately lashed the body of the black to his own, though his words received no interruption from a process that was executed with a seaman's dexterity. "Where was the man in your lubberly crew that could lay upon a yard with this here black, or haul upon a lee-earing while he held the weather line? Could any one of ye all give up his rations, in order that a sick messmate might fare the better! or work a double tide to spare the weak arm of a friend? Show me one who had as little dodge under a fire as a sound mainmast, and I will show you all that is left of his better. And now sway upon your whip, and thank God that the honest end goes up, while the rogues are suffered to keep their footing for a time."

"Sway away," echoed Nightingale, seconding his hoarse and ominous cry by the winding of his call; "away with them to heaven!"

"Hold!" exclaimed the chaplain, happily arresting the cord before it had yet done its fatal office. "For His sake, whose mercy may one day be needed by the most hardened of ye all, give but another moment of time! What mean these words? Do I read aright? 'Ark of Lynnhaven!'"

"Aye, aye," said Richard, loosening the rope a little, in order to speak with greater freedom, and transferring the last morsel of the weed from his box to his mouth, as he answered: "seeing you are an apt scholar, no wonder you make it out so easily, though written by a hand that was always better with a marling-spike than a quill."

"But whence came the words? Why do you bear those names thus written indelibly in the skin! Patience, men! monsters! demons! Would ye deprive the dying man of even a minute of that precious time which becomes so dear to all, as life is leaving us?"

"Give yet another minute!" said a deep voice from behind.

"Whence come these words, I ask!" again the chaplain demanded.

"They are neither more nor less than the manner in which a circumstance was logged, which is now of no consequence, seeing that the cruise is nearly up with all who are chiefly concerned. The black spoke of the collar; but, then, he thought I might be staying in port, while he was drifting between heaven and earth, in search of his last moorings."

"Is there aught here that I should know?" interrupted the eager, tremulous voice of Mrs. Wyllys.

"Oh, Merton! why these questions? Has my yearning been prophetic? Does Nature give so mysterious a warning of its claim!"

"Hush, dearest madam! your thoughts wander from probabilities, and my faculties become confused. 'The Ark of Lynnhaven' was the name of an estate in the islands, belonging to a near and dear friend, and it was the place where I received, and whence I sent to the main the precious trust confided to my care. But——"

"Say on!" she exclaimed, rushing madly in front of Wilder, and seizing the cord which, a moment before, had been tightened nearly to his destruction, stripping it from his throat with a sort of supernatural dexterity: "it was not then the name of a ship?"

"A ship! surely not. But what mean these hopes?—these fears?"

"The collar! the collar! speak; what of that collar?"

"It means no great things, now, my lady," returned Fid, very coolly placing himself in the same condition as Wilder, by profiting by the liberty of his arms and loosening his own neck from the halter, notwithstanding a movement made by some of the people to prevent it, which was, however, stayed by a look from their leader's eyes. "I will first cast loose this here rope; seeing that it is neither decent, nor safe, for an ignorant man like me, to enter into such unknown navigation ahead of his officer. The collar was just the necklace of the dog, which is here to be seen on the arm of poor Guinea, who was, in most respects, a man for whose equal one might look long in vain."

"Read it," said the governess, a film passing before her own eyes; "read it," she added, motioning with a quivering hand to the divine to peruse the inscription, that was distinctly legible on the plate of brass.

"Holy Dispenser of good! what is this I see? 'Neptune, the property of Paul De Lacey!'"

A loud cry burst from the lips of the governess; her hands were clasped one single instant upward, in that thanksgiving which oppressed her soul, and then, as recollection returned, Wilder was pressed fondly, frantically to her bosom, while her voice was heard to say, in the piercing tones of all-powerful nature—

"My child! my child! You will not—cannot—dare not rob a long-stricken and bereaved mother of her offspring! Give me back my son, my noble son! and I will weary heaven with prayers in your behalf. Ye are brave, and cannot be deaf to mercy. Ye are men, who have lived in constant view of God's majesty, and will not refuse to listen to the evidence of His pleasure. Give me my child, and I yield all else. He is of a race long honored upon the seas, and no mariner will be deaf to his claims. The widow of De Lacey, the daughter of ——, cries for mercy. Their united blood is in his veins, and it will not be spilled by you! A mother bows herself to the dust before you, to ask mercy for her offspring. O! give me my child! my child!"

As the words of the petitioner died upon the ear, a stillness settled on the place, that might have been likened to the holy calm which the entrance of better feelings leaves upon the soul of the sinner. The grim freebooters regarded each other in doubt; the workings of nature manifesting themselves even in their stern and hardened visages. Still, the desire for vengeance had got too firm a hold on their minds to be dispossessed at a word. The result would have been doubtful, had not one suddenly reappeared in their midst who never ordered in vain; and who knew

how to guide, to quell, or to mount or to trample on their humors, as his own pleasure dictated. For half a minute, he looked around him, his eye still following the circle, which receded as he gazed, until even those long accustomed to yield to his will began to wonder at the extraordinary aspect in which it was now exhibited. The gaze was wild and bewildered; and the face pallid as that of the petitioning mother. Three times did the lips sever, before sound issued from the caverns of his chest; then arose on the attentive ears of the breathless and listening crowd, a voice that seemed equally charged with inward emotion and high authority. With a haughty gesture of the hand, and a manner that was too well understood to be mistaken, he said—

"Disperse! Ye know my justice; but ye know I will be obeyed. My pleasure shall be known to-morrow."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"This is he;
Who hath upon him still that natural stamp
It was wise Nature's end in the donation,
To be his evidence now."—SHAKESPEARE.

THAT morrow came, and with it an entire change in the scene and character of our tale. The *Dolphin* and the *Dart* were sailing in amity, side by side; the latter bearing again the ensign of England, and the former carrying a naked gaff. The injuries of the gust and the combat had so far been repaired that, to a common eye, each gallant vessel was again prepared equally to encounter the hazards of the ocean or of warfare. A long, blue, hazy streak, to the north, proclaimed the proximity of the land; and some three or four coasters of that region, which were sailing nigh, announced how little hostility existed in the present purposes of the freebooters.

What those designs were, however, still remained a secret buried in the bosom of the Rover alone. Doubt, wonder, and distrust were, each in its turn, to be traced in the features of his captives and in those of his own crew. Throughout the whole of the long night, which had succeeded the important events of the day just passed, he had been pacing the poop in brooding silence. The little he had uttered was merely to divert the movements of the vessels; and when any ventured, with other design, to approach his person, a sign that none there dared disregard secured him the solitude he wished. Once or twice, indeed, the boy Roderick was seen hovering at his elbow, but it was as a guardian spirit would be fancied to linger near the object of its care, unobstrusively, and, it might almost be added, invisible. When, however, the sun came burnished and glorious out of the east, a gun was fired, to bring a coaster to the side of the *Dolphin*; and then, it seemed that the curtain was to be raised on the closing scene of the drama. With his crew assembled on the deck beneath, and the principal personages among his captives beside him on the poop, the Rover addressed the former:

"Years have united us by a common fortune," he said; "we have long been submissive to the same laws. If I have been prompt to punish, I have been ready to obey. You cannot charge me with injustice. But the covenant is now ended. I take back my pledge, and I return to you your faiths. Nay, frown not—hesitate not—murmur not! The compact ceases, and our laws are ended. Such was the condition of the service. I give you your liberty, and little do I claim in return. That you need have no grounds of reproach, I bestow my treasure. See," he added, raising that bloody ensign with which he had so often braved the power of the nations, and exhibiting beneath it sacks of that metal which has so long governed the world; "see? This was mine; it is now yours. It shall be put in yonder coaster; there I leave you, to bestow it, yourselves, on those who you may deem most worthy. Go; the land is near. Disperse, for your own sakes; nor hesitate; for, without me, well do ye know that the vessel of the King would be your master. This ship is already mine; of all the rest, I claim these prisoners alone for my portion. Farewell!"

Silent amazement succeeded this unlooked-for address. There was, indeed, for a moment, some disposition to rebel; but the measures of the Rover had been too well taken for resistance. The *Dart* lay on their beam, with her people at their guns, matches lighted, and a heavy battery. Unprepared without a leader, and surprised, opposition would have been madness. The first astonishment had scarcely abated, before each freebooter rushed to secure his individual effects, and to transfer them to the deck of the coaster. When all but the crew of a single boat had left the *Dolphin*, the promised gold was sent, and then the loaded craft was seen hastily seeking the shelter of some secret creek. During this scene, the Rover had been as silent as death. He next turned to Wilder, and making a mighty but successful effort to still his feelings, he added:

"Now must we, too, part. I commend my wounded to your care. They are necessarily with your surgeons. I know the trust I give will not be abused."

"My word is the pledge of their safety," returned the young De Lacey.

"I believe you. Lady," he added, approaching the elder of the females, with an air in which earnestness and hesitation strongly contended, "if a proscribed and guilty man may still address you, grant yet a favor."

"Name it; a mother's ear can never be deaf to him who has spared her child."

"When you petition Heaven for that child, forget not there is another being who may still profit by your prayers; no more. And now," he continued, looking about him like one who was determined to be equal to the pang of the moment, however difficult it might prove, and surveying, with an eye of painful regret, those naked decks which were so lately teeming with scenes of life and revelry; "and now—aye—now we part! The boat awaits you."

Wilder soon saw his mother and Gertrude into the pinnace; but he still lingered himself.

"And you!" he said, "what will become of you?"

"I shall shortly be—forgotten. Adieu!"

The manner in which the Rover spoke forbade delay. The young man hesitated, squeezed his hand and left him.

When Wilder found himself restored to his proper vessel, of which the death of Bignall had left him in command, he immediately issued the order to fill her sails, and to steer for the nearest haven of his country. So long as sight could read the movements of a man who remained on the decks of the *Dolphin*, not a look was averted from the motionless object. She lay, with her main-topsail to the mast, stationary as some beautiful fabric placed there by fairy power, still lovely in her proportions, and perfect in all her parts. A human form was seen swiftly pacing her poop, and by its side glided one who looked like a lessened shadow of that restless figure. At length distance swallowed these indistinct images; and then the eye was wearied, in vain, to trace the internal movements of the distant ship. But doubt was soon ended. Suddenly a streak of flame flashed from her decks, springing fiercely from sail to sail. A vast cloud of smoke broke out of the hull, and the deadened roar of artillery followed. To this succeeded, for a time, the awful, and yet attractive spectacle of a burning ship. The whole was terminated by an immense canopy of smoke, and an explosion that caused the sails of the distant *Dart* to waver, as if the winds of the trades were deserting their eternal direction. When the cloud had lifted from the ocean, an empty waste of water was seen beneath; and none might mark the spot where that beautiful specimen of human ingenuity had so lately floated. Some of those who ascended to the upper masts of the cruiser, and were aided by glasses, believed, indeed, that they could discern a solitary speck upon the sea; but whether it was a boat, or some fragment of the wreck, was never known.

From that time the history of the dreaded *Red Rover* became lost in the fresher incidents of those eventful seas. But the mariner long after was known to shorten the watches of the night by recounting scenes of mad enterprise that

The limb stiffened and fell, though the eyes still continued their affectionate and glaring gaze on that countenance he had so long loved, and which, in the midst of all his long endured wrongs, had never refused to meet his look of love in kindness.—*The Red Rover.*

were thought to have occurred under his auspices. Rumor did not fail to embellish and pervert them, until the real character, and even the name of the individual were confounded with the actors of other atrocities. Scenes of higher and more ennobling interest, too, were occurring on the Western Continent, to efface the circumstances of a legend that many deemed wild and improbable. The British colonies of North America had revolted against the government of the crown, and a weary war was bringing the contest to a successful issue. Newport, the opening scene of this tale, had been successively occupied by the arms of the King, and by those of that monarch who had sent the chivalry of his nation to aid in stripping his rival of her vast possessions.

The beautiful haven had sheltered hostile fleets and the peaceful villas had often rung with the merriment of youthful soldiers.

More than twenty years after the events just related had been added to the long record of time, when the island town witnessed the rejoicings of another festival—the allied forces had compelled the most enterprising leader of the British troops to yield himself and army captive to their numbers and skill. The struggle was believed to be over, and the worthy townsmen had, as usual, been loud in the manifestations of their pleasure. The rejoicings, however, ceased with the day; and, as night gathered over the place, the little city was resuming its customary provincial tranquillity. A gallant frigate, which lay in the very spot where the vessel of the Rover had first been seen, had already lowered the gay assemblage of friendly ensigns which had been spread in the usual order of a gala-day. A flag of intermingled colors, and bearing a constellation of bright and rising stars, alone was floating at her gaff. Just at this moment, another cruiser, but one of less magnitude, was seen entering the roadstead, bearing also the friendly ensign of the new States. Headed by the tide, and deserted by the breeze, she soon dropped an anchor, in the pass between Canonicut and Rhode, when a boat was seen making for the inner harbor, impelled by the arms of six powerful rowers. As the barge approached a retired and lonely wharf, a solitary observer of its movements was enabled to see that it contained a curtained litter, and a single female form. Before the curiosity, which such a sight would be apt to create in the breast of one like the spectator mentioned, had time to exercise itself in conjectures, the oars were tossed, the boat had touched the piles, and, borne by the seamen, the litter, attended by the woman, stood before him.

"Tell me, I pray you," said the voice, in whose tones grief and resignation were singularly combined, "if Captain Henry De Lacey, of the continental marine, has a residence in this town of Newport?"

"That has he," answered the aged man addressed by the female, "that has he; or as one might say, two; since yonder frigate is no less his than the dwelling on the hill just by."

"Thou art too old to point us out the way; but if grandchild, or idler of any sort, be near, here is silver to reward him."

"Lord help you, lady!" returned the other, casting an oblique glance at her appearance as a sort of salvo for the term, and pocketing the trifling piece she offered with singular care; "Lord, help you, madam! old though I am, and something worn down by hardships and marvelous adventures, both by sea and land, yet will I gladly do so small an office for one of your condition. Follow, and you shall see that your pilot is not altogether unused to the path."

The old man turned, and was leading the way off the wharf, even before he had completed the assurance of his boasted ability. The seamen and the female followed, the latter walking sorrowfully and in silence by the side of the litter.

"If you have need of refreshment," said their guide, pointing over his shoulder, "yonder is a well-known inn, and one much frequented in its time by mariners. Neighbor Joram and the 'Foul Anchor' have had a reputation in their day, as well as the greatest warrior in the land;

and, though honest Joe is gathered in for the general harvest, the house stands as firm as the day he first entered it. A goodly end he made, and profitable is it to the weak-minded sinner to keep such an example before his eyes!"

A smothered sound issued from the litter; but, though the guide stopped to listen, it was succeeded by no other evidence of the character of its tenant.

"The sick man is suffering," he resumed, "but bodily pain, and all afflictions which we suffer in the flesh, must have their allotted time. I have lived to see seven bloody and cruel wars, of which this, which now rages, is, I humbly trust, to be the last. Of the wonders which I witnessed, and the bodily dangers which I compassed in the sixth, eye hath never beheld, nor can tongue utter their equal!"

"Time hath dealt hardly by you, friend," meekly interrupted the female. "This gold may add a few more comfortable days to those that are already passed."

The cripple, for their conductor was lame as well as aged, received the offering with gratitude, apparently too much occupied in estimating its amount to give any more of his immediate attention to the discourse. In the deep silence that succeeded, the party reached the door of the villa they sought.

It was now night; the short twilight of the season having disappeared while the bearers of the litter were ascending the hill. A loud rap was given by the guide; and then he was told that his services were no longer needed.

"I have seen much and hard service," he replied, "and well do I know that the prudent marine does not dismiss the pilot until the ship is safely moored. Perhaps old Madam De Lacey is abroad, or the Captain himself may not——"

"Enough; here is one who will answer all our questions."

The portal was opened, and a man appeared on its threshold, holding a light. The appearance of the porter was not, however, of the most encouraging aspect. A certain air, which can neither be assumed nor gotten rid of proclaimed him a son of the ocean, while a wooden limb, which served to prop a portion of his still square and athletic body, sufficiently proved he was one who had not attained the experience of his hardy calling without some bodily risk. His countenance, as he held the light above his head, to scan the persons of those without, was dogmatic, scowling, and a little fierce. He was not long, however, in recognizing the cripple, of whom he unceremoniously demanded the object of what he was pleased to term "such a night squall."

"Here is a wounded mariner," returned the female, with tones so tremulous that they instantly softened the heart of the nautical Cerberus, "who is come to claim hospitality of a brother in the service, and shelter for the night. We would speak with Captain Henry De Lacey."

"Then you have struck soundings on the right coast, madam," returned the tar, "as Master Paul, here, will say in the name of his father, no less than in that of the sweet lady, his mother; not forgetting old madam his grandam, who is no fresh-water fish herself, for that matter."

"That he will," said a fine, manly youth of some seventeen years, who wore the attire of one who was already in training for the seas, and who was looking curiously over the shoulder of the elderly seaman. "I will acquaint my father of the visit, and, Richard, do you seek out a proper berth for our guests without delay."

This order, which was given with the air of one who had been accustomed to act for himself, and to speak with authority, was instantly obeyed. The apartment selected by Richard was the ordinary parlor of the dwelling. Here, in a few moments, the litter was deposited; the bearers were then dismissed, and the female only was left, with its tenant and rude attendant, who had not hesitated to give them so frank a reception. The latter busied himself in trimming the lights, and in replenishing a bright wood fire, taking care, at the same time, that no unnecessary vacuum should occur in the discourse to render the brief interval, necessary for the appearance of his superiors, tedious. During this state of things an inner door

was opened, the youth already named leading the way for the three principal personages of the mansion.

First came a middle-aged, athletic man, in the naval undress of a captain of the new States. His look was calm and his step still firm, though time and exposure were beginning to sprinkle his head with gray. He wore one arm in a sling, a proof that his service was still recent; on the other leaned a lady, in whose matronly mien, but still blooming cheek and bright eyes, were to be traced most of the ripened beauties of her sex. Behind them followed a third, a female also, whose step was less elastic, but whose person continued to exhibit the evidences of a peaceful evening to the troubled day of life. The three courteously saluted the stranger, delicately refraining from making any precipitate allusion to the motive of her visit. Their reserve seemed by no means unnecessary; for by the manifest agitation which shook the shattered frame of one who appeared as much sinking with grief as infirmity, it was too apparent that the unknown lady needed a little time to collect her energies, and to arrange her thoughts.

She wept long and bitterly, as if alone; nor did she essay to speak until further silence would have become suspicious. Then, drying her eyes, and with cheeks on which a bright hectic spot was seated, her voice was heard for the first time by her wondering hosts.

"You may deem this visit an intrusion," she said; "but one, whose will is my law, would be brought hither."

"Wherefore?" asked the officer, observing that her voice was already choked.

"To die!" was the whispered, husky answer.

A common start manifested the surprise of her auditors, and then the gentleman arose, and, approaching the litter, he gently drew aside a curtain, exposing its hitherto unseen tenant to the examination of all in the room. There was understanding in the look that met his gaze, though death was too plainly stamped on the lineaments of the wounded man. His eye alone seemed still to belong to earth; for, while all around it appeared already to be sunk into the helplessness of the last stage of human debility, that was still bright, intelligent and glowing—it might almost have been described as glaring.

"Is there aught in which we can contribute to your comfort, or to your wishes?" asked Captain De Lacey, after a long and solemn pause, during which all around the litter had mournfully contemplated the sad spectacle of sinking mortality.

The smile of the dying man was ghastly though tenderness and sorrow were singularly and fearfully combined in its expression. He answered not; but his eyes wandered from face to face, until they became riveted, by a species of charm, on the countenance of the oldest of the two females. His gaze was met by a look as settled as his own; so evident was the sympathy which existed between the two, that it could not escape the observation of the spectators.

"Mother!" said the officer with affectionate concern; "my mother! what troubles you?"

"Henry—Gertrude," answered the venerable parent extending her arms to her offspring, as if she asked support; "my children, your doors have been opened to one who has a claim to enter them. Oh! it is in these terrible moments, when passion is asleep and our weakness most apparent, in these moments of debility and disease, that nature so strongly manifests its impression! I see it all in that fading countenance, in those sunken features, where so little is left but the last lingering look of family and kindred!"

"Kindred!" exclaimed De Lacey. "Of what affinity is our guest?"

"A brother!" answered the lady, dropping her head on her bosom, as if she had proclaimed a decree of consanguinity which gave pain as well as pleasure.

The stranger, too much overcome himself to speak, made a joyful gesture of assent; but he never averted a gaze that seemed destined to maintain its direction so long as life should lend it intelligence.

"A brother!" repeated her son, in un-

feigned astonishment. "I knew you had a brother; but I had thought him dead a boy."

"'Twas so I long believed, myself, though frightful glimpses of the contrary have often beset me; but now the truth is too plain, in that fading visage and those fallen features, to be misunderstood. Poverty and misfortune divided us. I suppose we thought each other dead."

Another feeble gesture proclaimed the assent of the wounded man.

"There is no farther mystery. Henry, the stranger is thy uncle—my brother—once, my pupil!"

"I could wish to see him under happier circumstances," returned the officer, with a seaman's frankness; "but, as a kinsman, he is welcome. Poverty, at least, shall no longer divide you."

"Look, Henry—Gertrude!" added the mother, veiling her own eyes as she spoke, "that face is no stranger to you. See ye not the sad ruins of one ye both fear and love?"

Wonder kept her children mute, though they looked until sight became confused, so long and intense was their examination. Then a hollow sound which came from the chest of the stranger, caused them to start; and, when his low, but distinct enunciation reached their ears, doubt and perplexity vanished.

"Wilder," he said, with an effort in which his utmost strength appeared exerted, "I have come to ask the last office at your hands."

"Captain Heidegger!" exclaimed the officer.

"The Red Rover!" murmured the younger Mrs. De Lacey, involuntarily recoiling a pace from the litter.

"The Red Rover!" repeated her son, pressing nigher with ungovernable curiosity.

"Laid by the heels at last!" bluntly observed Fid, stumping up toward the group, without relinquishing the tongs which he had kept in constant use, as an apology for remaining in the room.

"I had long hid my repentance, and my shame, together," continued the dying man, when the momentary surprise had a little abated; "but this war drew me from my concealment. Our country needed us both, and both has she had! You have served as one who never offended might serve; but a cause so holy was not to be tarnished by a name like mine. May the little I have done for good be remembered, when the world speaks of the evil of my hands! Sister—mother—pardon."

"May that God, who forms his creatures with such fearful natures, look mercifully on all our weaknesses!" exclaimed the weeping Mrs. De Lacey, bowing to her kness, and lifting her hands and eyes to heaven. "O, brother! brother! you have been trained in the holy mystery of your redemption, and need not now to be told on what Rock to place your hopes of pardon!"

"Had I never forgotten those precepts, my name would still be known with honor. But—Wilder!" he added, with startling energy, "Wilder!"

All eyes were eagerly bent on the speaker. His hand was holding a roll, on which he had been reposing, as on a pillow. With a supernatural effort, his form rose on the litter; and, with both hands elevated above his head, he let fall before him that blazonry of intermingled stripes, with its blue field of rising stars, a glow of high exultation illumining every feature of his face, as in his day of pride.

"Wilder!" he repeated, laughing hysterically, "we have triumphed!" He fell backward, without motion, the exulting lineaments settling in the gloom of death, as shadows obscure the smiling brightness on the sun.

THE END OF "THE RED ROVER."

THE TWO ADMIRALS.

CHAPTER I.

"Then, if he were my brother's,
My brother might not claim him; nor your father,
Being none of his, refuse him: This concludes—
My mother's son did get your father's heir;
Your father's heir must have your father's land."
—KING JOHN.

THE events we are about to relate occurred near the middle of the last century, previously even to that struggle which it is the fashion of America to call "the old French War." The opening scene of our tale, however, must be sought in the other hemisphere, and on the coast of the mother country. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the American colonies were models of loyalty; the very war to which there has just been allusion, causing the great expenditure that induced the ministry to have recourse to the system of taxation which terminated in the Revolution. The family quarrel had not yet commenced. Intensely occupied with the conflict, which terminated not more gloriously for the British arms than advantageously for the British American possessions, the inhabitants of the provinces were perhaps never better disposed to the metropolitan state than at the very period of which we are about to write. All their early predilections seemed to be gaining strength, instead of becoming weaker; and, as in nature, the calm is known to succeed the tempest, the blind attachment of the colony to the parent country was but a precursor of the alienation and violent disunion that were so soon to follow.

Although the superiority of the English seaman was well established, in the conflicts that took place between the year 1740 and that of 1763, the naval warfare of the period by no means possessed the very decided character with which it became stamped a quarter of a century later. In our own times, the British marine appears to have improved in quality, as its enemies' deteriorated. In the year 1812, however, "Greek met Greek," when of a verity came "the tug of war." The great change that came over the other navies of Europe was merely a consequence of the revolutions, which drove experienced men into exile, and which, by rendering armies all-important even to the existence of the different states, threw nautical enterprises into the shade, and gave an engrossing direction to courage and talent in another quarter. While France was struggling, first for independence, and next for the mastery of the Continent, a marine was a secondary object; for Vienna, Berlin and Moscow were as easily entered without as with its aid. To these and other similar causes must be referred the explanation of the seeming invincibility of the English arms at sea, during the late great conflicts of Europe; an invincibility that was more apparent than real, however, as many well-established defeats were, even then, intermingled with her thousand victories.

From the time when her numbers could furnish succor of this nature, down to the day of separation, America had her full share in the exploits of the English marine. The gentry of the colonies willingly placed their sons in the royal navy, and many a bit of square bunting has been flying at the royal mastheads of king's ships, in the nineteenth century, as the distinguishing symbols of flag-officers, who had to look for their birthplace among ourselves. In the course of a checkered life,

in which we have been brought in collision with as great a diversity of rank, professions, and characters, as often falls to the lot of any one individual, we have been thrown into contact with no less than eight English admirals of American birth; while it has never yet been our good fortune to meet with a countryman who has had this rank bestowed on him by his own government. On one occasion, an Englishman, who had filled the highest civil office connected with the marine of his nation, observed to us, that the only man he then knew, in the British navy, in whom he should feel an entire confidence in intrusting an important command, was one of these translated admirals; and the thought unavoidably passed through our mind, that this favorite commander had done well in adhering to the conventional, instead of clinging to his natural allegiance, inasmuch as he might have toiled for half a century, in the service of his native land, and been rewarded with a rank that would merely put him on a level with a colonel in the army! How much longer this short-sighted policy and grievous injustice are to continue, no man can say; but it is safe to believe that it is to last until some legislator of influence learns the simple truth, that the fancied reluctance of popular constituencies to do right oftener exists in the apprehensions of their representatives than in reality. But to our tale.

England enjoys a widespread reputation for her fogs; but little do they know how much a fog may add to natural scenery, who never witnessed its magical effects as it has caused the beautiful landscape to coquette with the eye, in playful and capricious changes. Our opening scene is in one of these much derided fogs; though, let it always be remembered, it was a fog of June, and not of November. On a high headland of the coast of Devonshire stood a little station-house, which had been erected with a view to communicate by signals with the shipping that sometimes lay at anchor in an adjacent roadstead. A little inland is a village, or hamlet, that it suits our purpose to call Wychecombe; and at no great distance from the village itself, surrounded by a small park, stood a house of the age of Henry VII., which was the abode of Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, a baronet of the creation of King James I., and the possessor of an improvable estate of some three or four thousand a year, which had been transmitted to him through a line of ancestors that ascended as far back as the time of the Plantagenets. Neither Wychecombe, nor the headland, nor the anchorage, was a place of note; for much larger and more favored hamlets, villages and towns lay scattered about that fine portion of England; much better roadsteads and bays could generally be used by the coming or the parting vessel; and far more important signal-stations were to be met with, all along that coast. Nevertheless, the roadstead was entered when calm or adverse winds rendered it expedient; the hamlet had its conveniences, and, like most English hamlets, its beauties; and the hall and park were not without their claim to state and rural magnificence. A century since, whatever the table of precedency or Blackstone may say, an English baronet, particularly one of the date of 1611, was a much greater personage than he is to-day; and an estate of £4,000 a year, more especially if not rack-rented, was of an extent, and necessarily of a local consequence, equal to one of near, or quite three times the same amount, in our own day.

Sir Wycherly, however, enjoyed an advantage that was of still greater importance, and which was more common in 1745, than at the present moment. He had no rival within fifteen miles of him, and the nearest potentate was a nobleman of a rank and fortune that put all competition out of the question; one who dwelt in courts, the favorite of kings; leaving the Baronet, as it might be, in undisturbed enjoyment of all the local homage. Sir Wycherly had once been a member of Parliament, and only once. In his youth, he had been a foxhunter; and a small property in Yorkshire had long been in the family, as a sort of foothold on such enjoyments; but having broken a leg, in one of his leaps, he had taken refuge

against *ennui*, by sitting a single session in the House of Commons, as the member of a borough that lay adjacent to his hunting-box. This session sufficed for his whole life; the good baronet having taken the matter so literally as to be present at all the sittings; a sort of tax on his time, which, as it came wholly unaccompanied by profit, was very likely soon to tire out the patience of an old fox-hunter. After resigning his seat, he retired altogether to Wychecombe, where he passed the last fifty years, extolling England, and most especially that part of it in which his own estate lay; in abusing the French, with occasional innuendoes against Spain and Holland; and in eating and drinking. He had never traveled; for, though Englishmen of his station often did visit the Continent, a century ago, they oftener did not. It was the courtly and the noble, who then chiefly took this means of improving their minds and manners; a class to which the Baronet by no means necessarily belonged.

To conclude, Sir Wycherly was now eighty-four; hale, hearty, and a bachelor. He had been born the oldest of five brothers; the cadets taking refuge, as usual, in the inns of court, the church, the army, and the navy; and precisely in the order named. The lawyer had actually risen to be a judge, by the style and appellation of Baron Wychecombe; had three illegitimate children by his housekeeper, and died, leaving to the eldest thereof all his professional earnings, after buying commissions for the two younger in the army. The divine broke his neck, while yet a curate, in a fox-hunt; dying unmarried, and, so far as is generally known, childless. This was Sir Wycherly's favorite brother; who, he was accustomed to say, "lost his life in setting an example of field-sports to his parishioners." The soldier was fairly killed in battle, before he was twenty; and the name of the sailor suddenly disappeared from the list of his Majesty's lieutenants, about half a century before the time when our tale opens, by shipwreck. Between the sailor and the head of the family, however, there had been no great sympathy; in consequence, as it was rumored, of a certain beauty's preference for the latter, though this preference produced no *suites*, inasmuch as the lady died a maid. Mr. Gregory Wychecombe, the lieutenant in question, was what is termed a "wild boy;" and it was the general impression, when his parents sent him to sea, that the ocean would now meet with its match.

The hopes of the family centered in the judge, after the death of the curate, and it was a great cause of regret, to those who took an interest in its perpetuity and renown, that this dignitary did not marry; since the premature death of all the other sons had left the hall, park, and goodly farms, without any known legal heir. In a word, this branch of the family of Wychecombe would be extinct, when Sir Wycherly died, and the entail become useless. Not a female inheritor, even, or a male inheritor through females could be traced; and it had become imperative on Sir Wycherly to make a will, lest the property should go off, the Lord knows where; or, what was worse, it should escheat. It is true, Tom Wychecombe, the Judge's eldest son, often gave dark hints about a secret, and a timely marriage between his parents, a fact that would have superseded the necessity for all devises, as the property was strictly tied up, so far as the lineal descendants of a certain *old* Sir Wycherly were concerned; but the present Sir Wycherly had seen his brother, in his last illness, on which occasion the following conversation had taken place.

"And now, brother Thomas," said the Baronet, in a friendly and consoling manner, "having, as one may say, prepared your soul for heaven, by these prayers and admissions of your sins, a word may be prudently said concerning the affairs of this world. You know I am childless—that is to say——"

"I understand you, Wycherly," interrupted the dying man "you're a *bachelor*."

"That's it, Thomas; and bachelors *ought* not to have children. Had our poor brother James escaped that mishap, he might have been sitting at your bedside

at this moment, and *he* could have told us all about it. St. James I used to call him; and well did he deserve the name!"

"St. James the Least, then it must have been, Wycherly."

"It's a dreadful thing to have no heir, Thomas! Did you ever know a case in your practice, in which another estate was left so completely without an heir, as this of ours?"

"It does not often happen, brother; heirs are usually more abundant than estates."

"So I thought. Will the king get the title as well as the estate, brother, if it should escheat, as you call it?"

"Being the fountain of honor, he will be rather indifferent about the Baronetcy."

"I should care less if it went to the next sovereign who is English born. Wychecombe has always belonged to Englishmen."

"That it has; and ever will, I trust. You have only to select an heir, when I am gone, and, by making a will, with proper devises, the property will be escheat. Be careful to use the full terms of perpetuity."

"Everything was comfortable, brother, while you were in health," said Sir Wycherly, fidgeting; "you were my natural heir——"

"Heir of entail," interrupted the Judge.

"Well, well, *heir*, at all events; and that was a prodigious comfort to a man like myself, who has a sort of religious scruple about making a will. I have heard it whispered that you were actually married to Martha; in which case Tom might drop into our shoes so readily, without any more signing and sealing."

"A *filius nullius*," returned the other, too conscientious to lend himself to a deception of that nature.

"Why, brother, Tom often seems to me to favor such an idea himself."

"No wonder, Wycherly, for the idea would greatly favor him. Tom and his brothers are all *filii nullorum*—God forgive me for that same wrong."

"I wonder neither Charles nor Gregory thought of marrying before they lost their lives for their king and country," put in Sir Wycherly, in an upbraiding tone, as if he thought his penniless brethren had done him an injury in neglecting to supply him with an heir, though he had been so forgetful himself of the same duty. "I did think of bringing in a bill for providing heirs for unmarried persons, without the trouble and responsibility of making wills."

"That would have been a great improvement on the law of descents; I hope you wouldn't have overlooked the ancestors."

"Not I; everybody would have got his rights. They tell me poor Charles never spoke after he was shot; but I dare say, did he know the truth, he regretted sincerely that he never married."

"There, for once, Wycherly, I think you are likely to be wrong. A *femme sole* without food is rather a helpless sort of person."

"Well, well, I wish he had married. What would it have been to me, had he left a dozen widows?"

"It might have raised some awkward questions as to dowry; and if each left a son, the title and estates would have been worse off than they are at present, without widows or legitimate children."

"Anything would be better than having no heir. I believe I'm the first baronet of Wychecombe who has been obliged to make a will!"

"Quite likely," returned the brother, dryly; "I remember to have got nothing from the last one, in that way. Charles and Gregory fared no better. Never mind, Wycherly, you behaved like a father to us all."

"I don't mind signing checks, in the least; but wills have an irreligious appearance, in my eyes. There are a good many Wychecombes, in England; I wonder some of them are not of our family! They tell me a hundredth cousin is just as good an heir as a first-born son."

"Failing nearer of kin. But we have no hundredth cousins of the *whole blood*."

"There are the Wychecombes of Surrey, brother Thomas——"

"Descended from a bastard of the

second baronet, and out of the line of descent, altogether."

"But the Wychecombes of Hertfordshire I have always heard were of our family, and legitimate."

"True, as regards matrimony—rather too much of it, by the way. They branched off in 1487, long before the creation, and have nothing to do with the entail; the first of their line coming from old Sir Michael Wychecombe, Kt., and Sheriff of Devonshire, by his second wife, Margaret; while we are derived from the same male ancestor, through Wycherly, the only son by Joan, the first wife. Wycherly, and Michael, the son of Michael and Margery, were the half-blood, as respects each other, and could not be heirs of blood. What was true of the ancestors is true of the descendants."

"But we came of the same ancestor, and the estate is far older than 1487."

"Quite true, brother; nevertheless, the half-blood can't take; so says the perfection of human reason."

"I never could understand these niceties of the law," said Sir Wycherly, sighing; "but I suppose they are all right. There are so many Wychecombes scattered about England, that I should think some one among them all might be my heir!"

"Every man of them bears a bar in his arms, or is of the half-blood."

"You are quite sure, brother, that Tom is a *filius nullus?*" for the Baronet had forgotten most of the Latin he ever knew, and translated this legal phrase into "no son."

"*Filius nullius*, Sir Wycherly, the son of nobody; your reading would literally make Tom nobody; whereas, he is only the son of nobody."

"But, brother, he is your son, and as like you as two hounds of the same litter."

"I am *nullus*, in the eye of the law, as regards poor Tom; who, until he marries, and has children of his own, is altogether without legal kindred. Nor do I know that legitimacy would make Tom any better; for he is presuming and confident enough for the heir apparent to the throne, as it is."

"Well, there's this young sailor, who has been so much at the station lately, since he was left ashore for the cure of his wounds. 'Tis a most gallant lad; and the First Lord has sent him a commission, as a reward for his good conduct in cutting out the Frenchman. I look upon him as a credit to the name; and I make no question, he is, some way or other, of our family."

"Does he claim to be so?" asked the judge, a little quickly, for he distrusted men in general, and thought, from all he had heard, that some attempt might have been made to practice on his brother's simplicity. "I thought you told me that he came from the American colonies?"

"So he does; he's a native of Virginia, as was his father before him."

"A convict, perhaps; or a servant, quite likely, who has found the name of his former master more to his liking than his own. Such things are common, they tell me, beyond seas."

"Yes, if he were any thing but an American, I might wish he were my heir," returned Sir Wycherly, in a melancholy tone; "but it would be worse than to let the lands escheat, as you call it, to place an American in possession of Wychecombe. The manors have always had English owners, down to the present moment, thank God!"

"Should they have any other, it will be your own fault, Wycherly. When I am dead, and that will happen ere many weeks, the human being will not be living who can take that property, after your demise, in any other manner than by escheat or by devise. There will then be neither heir of entail, nor heir at law; and you may make whom you please master at Wychecombe, provided he be not an alien."

"Not an American, I suppose, brother; an American is an alien, of course."

"Humph! why, not in law, whatever he may be according to our English notions. Harkee, brother Wycherly; I've never asked you, or wished you to leave the estate to Tom, or his younger brothers; for one and all are *filii nullorum*—as I term 'em, though my brother, Record, will have it, it ought to be *filii*

nullius, as well as *filius nullius*. Let that be as it may; no bastard should lord it at Wychecombe; and rather than the king should get the lands, to bestow on some favorite, I would give it to the half-blood."

"Can that be done without making a will, brother Thomas?"

"It cannot, Sir Wycherly; nor with a will, so long as an heir of entail can be found."

"Is there no way of making Tom a *filius somebody*, so that *he* can succeed?"

"Not under our laws. By the civil law, such a thing might have been done, and by the Scotch law; but not under the perfection of reason."

"I wish you knew this young Virginian! The lad bears both of my names, Wycherly Wychecombe."

"He is not a *filius Wycherly*—is he, Baronet?"

"Fie upon thee, brother Thomas! Do you think I have less candor than thyself, that I would not acknowledge my own flesh and blood? I never saw the youngster, until within the last six months, when he was landed from the roadstead, and brought to Wychecombe, to be cured of his wounds; nor ever heard of him before. When they told me his name was Wycherly Wychecombe, I could do no less than call and see him. The poor fellow lay at death's door for a fortnight. And it was while we had little or no hope of saving him, that I got the few family anecdotes from him. Now that would be good evidence in law, I believe, Thomas."

"For certain things, had the lad really died. Surviving, he must be heard on his *voir dire*, and under oath. But what was his tale?"

"A very short one. He told me his father was a Wycherly Wychecombe, and that his grandfather had been a Virginia planter. This was all he seemed to know of his ancestry."

"And probably all there was of them. My Tom is not the only *filius nullius* that has been among us, and this grandfather, if he has not actually stolen the name, has got it by these doubtful means. As for the Wycherly, it should pass for nothing. Learning that there is a line of baronets of his name, every pretender to the family would be apt to call a son Wycherly."

"The line will shortly be ended, brother," returned Sir Wycherly, sighing. "I wish you might be mistaken, and, after all, Tom shouldn't prove to be that *filius* you call him."

Mr. Baron Wychecombe, as much from *esprit de corps* as from moral principle, was a man of strict integrity, in all things that related to *meum* and *tuum*. He was particularly rigid in his notions concerning the transmission of real estate, and the rights of primogeniture. The world had taken little interest in the private history of a lawyer, and his sons having been born before his elevation to the bench, he passed with the public for a widower, with a family of promising boys. Not one in a hundred of his acquaintances even suspected the fact; and nothing would have been easier for him than to have imposed on his brother, by inducing him to make a will under some legal mystification or other, and to have caused Tom Wychecombe to succeed to the property in question by an indisputable title. There would have been no great difficulty even, in his son's assuming and maintaining his right to the baronetcy, inasmuch as there would be no competitor, and the crown officers were not particularly rigid in inquiring into the claims of those who assumed a title that brought with it no political privileges. Still, he was far from indulging in any such project. To him it appeared that the Wychecombe estate ought to go with the principles that usually governed such matters; and, although he submitted to the dictum of the common law, as regarded the provision which excluded the half-blood from inheriting, with the deference of an English common-law lawyer, he saw and felt that, failing the direct line, Wychecombe ought to revert to the descendants of Sir Michael by his second son, for the plain reason that they were just as much derived from the person who had acquired the estate as his brother Wycherly and himself. Had there been descendants of females even to interfere, no such opinion would have existed; but, as between an

escheat, or a devise in favor of a *filius nullius*, or of the descendant of a *filius nullius*, the half-blood possessed every possible advantage. In his legal eyes, legitimacy was everything, although he had not hesitated to be the means of bringing into the world seven illegitimate children, that being the precise number Martha had the credit of having borne him, though three only survived. After reflecting a moment, therefore, he turned to the Baronet, and addressed him more seriously than he had yet done, in the present dialogue; first taking a draught of cordial to give him strength for the occasion.

"Listen to me, brother Wycherly," said the judge, with a gravity that at once caught the attention of the other. "You know something of the family history, and I need do no more than allude to it. Our ancestors were the knightly possessors of Wychecombe, centuries before King James established the rank of baronet. When our great-grandfather, Sir Wycherly, accepted the patent of 1611, he scarcely did himself honor; for, by aspiring higher, he might have got a peerage. However, a baronet he became, and for the first time since Wychecombe was Wychecombe, the estate was entailed to do credit to the new rank. Now, the first Sir Wycherly had three sons, and no daughter. Each of these sons succeeded: the two eldest as bachelors, and the youngest was our grandfather. Sir Thomas, the fourth baronet, left an only child, Wycherly, our father. Sir Wycherly, our father, had five sons: Wycherly, his successor, yourself, and the sixth baronet; myself, James, Charles, and Gregory. The two last lost their lives in the king's service, unmarried; and neither you nor I have entered into the holy state of matrimony. I cannot survive a month, and the hope of perpetuating the direct line of the family rests with yourself. This accounts for all the descendants of Sir Wycherly, the first baronet; and it also settles the question of heirs of entail, of whom there are none after myself. To go back beyond the time of King James I.: Twice did the elder lines of the Wychecombes fail, between the reign of King Richard II. and King Henry VII., when Sir Michael succeeded. Now, in each of these cases, the law disposed of the succession: the youngest branches of the family, in both instances, getting the estate. It follows, agreeably to legal decisions had at the time, when the facts must have been known, that the Wychecombes were reduced to these younger lines. Sir Michael had two wives. From the first *we* are derived; from the last, the Wychecombes of Hertfordshire, since known as baronets of that county, by the style and title of Sir Reginald Wychecombe of Wychecombe-Regis, Herts."

"The present Sir Reginald can have no claim, being of the half-blood," put in Sir Wycherly, with a brevity of manner that denoted feeling. "The half-blood is as bad as a *nullius*, as you call Tom."

"Not quite. A person of the half-blood may be as legitimate as the king's majesty; whereas, a *nullius* is of *no* blood. Now, suppose for a moment, Sir Wycherly, that you had been a son by a first wife, and I had been a son by a second—would there have been no relationship between us?"

"What a question, Tom, to put to your brother!"

"But I should not be your *own* brother, my good sir; only your *half* brother; of the *half*, and not of the *whole* blood."

"What of that—what of that? your father would have been my father—we would have had the same name—the same family history—the same family *feelings*—poh! poh! we should have both been Wychecombes, exactly as we are to-day."

"Quite true, and yet I could not have been your heir, nor you mine. The estate would escheat to the king, Hanoverian or Scotchman, before it came to me. Indeed, to *me* it could never come."

"Thomas, you are trifling with my ignorance, and making matters worse than they really are. Certainly, as long as you lived, you would be *my* heir!"

"Very true, as to the £20,000 in the funds, but not as to the baronetcy, and Wychecombe. So far as the two last are

concerned, I am heir of blood, and of entail, of the body of Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, the first baronet, and the maker of the entail."

"Had there been no entail, and I had died a child, who would have succeeded our father, supposing there had been two mothers?"

"I, as the next surviving son."

"There! I knew it must be so!" exclaimed Sir Wycherly, in triumph; "and all this time you have been joking with me!"

"Not so fast, brother of mine—not so fast. I should be of the *whole* blood, as respected our father, and all the Wychecombes that have gone before him; but of the *half*-blood, as respected *you*. From our father I might have taken, as his heir-at-law; but from *you*, never, having been of the *half*-blood."

"I would have made a will, in that case, Thomas, and left you every farthing," said Sir Wycherly, with feeling.

"That is just what I wish you to do with Sir Reginald Wychecombe. You must take him; a *fillius nullius*, in the person of my son Tom; a stranger; or let the property escheat; for, we are so peculiarly placed as not to have a known relative, by either the male or female lines; the maternal ancestors being just as barren of heirs as the paternal. Our good mother was the natural daughter of the third Earl of Prolific; our grandmother was the last of her race, so far as human ken can discover; our great-grandmother is said to have had semi-royal blood in her veins, without the aid of the Church, and beyond that it would be hopeless to attempt tracing consanguinity on that side of the house. No, Wycherly; it is Sir Reginald who has the best right to the land; Tom, or one of his brothers, an utter stranger, or his Majesty, follow. Remember that estates of £4,000 a year don't often escheat nowadays."

"If you'll draw up a will, brother, I'll leave it all to Tom," cried the Baronet, with sudden energy. "Nothing need be said about the *nullius;* and when I'm gone, he'll step quietly into my place."

Nature triumphed a moment in the bosom of the father; but habit, and the stern sense of right soon overcame the feeling. Perhaps certain doubts, and a knowledge of his son's real character, contributed their share toward the reply.

"It ought not to be, Sir Wycherly," returned the judge, musing; "Tom has no right to Wychecombe, and Sir Reginald has the best moral right possible, though the law cuts him off. Had Sir Michael made the entail, instead of our great-grandfather, he would have come in as a matter of course."

"I never liked Sir Reginald Wychecombe," said the Baronet, stubbornly,

"What of that? He will not trouble you while living, and when dead it will be the same. Come, come—I will draw the will myself, leaving blanks for the name; and when it is once done, you will sign it, cheerfully. It is the last legal act I shall ever perform, and it will be a suitable one, death being constantly before me."

This ended the dialogue. The will was drawn according to promise; Sir Wycherly took it to his room to read, carefully inserted the name of Tom Wychecombe in all the blank spaces, brought it back, duly executed the instrument in his brother's presence, and then gave the paper to his nephew to preserve, with a strong injunction on him to keep the secret, until the instrument should have force by his own death. Mr. Baron Wychecombe died in six weeks, and the Baronet returned to his residence, a sincere mourner for the loss of an only brother. A more unfortunate selection of an heir could not have been made, as Tom Wychecombe was, in reality, the son of a barrister in the Temple; the fancied likeness to the reputed father existing only in the imagination of his credulous uncle.

CHAPTER II.

"How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows, and choughs, that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles! Half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire; dreadful trade!"
—KING LEAR.

THIS digression on the family of Wychecombe has led us far from the signal-

station, the headland, and the fog, with which the tale opened. The little dwelling connected with the station stood at a short distance from the staff, sheltered, by the formation of the ground, from the bleak winds of the channel, and fairly embowered in shrubs and flowers. It was a humble cottage, that had been ornamented with more taste than was usual in England in that day. Its whitened walls, thatched roof, picketed garden, and trellised porch, bespoke care and a mental improvement in the inmates, that were scarcely to be expected in persons so humbly employed as the keeper of the signal staff, and his family. All near the house, too, was in the same excellent condition: for while the headland itself lay in common, this portion of it was inclosed in two or three pretty little fields, that were grazed by a single horse, and a couple of cows. There were no hedges, however, the thorn not growing willingly in a situation so exposed; but the fields were divided by fences, neatly enough made of wood, that declared its own origin, having in fact been part of the timber and planks of a wreck. As the whole was white-washed, it had a rustic, and, in a climate where the sun is seldom oppressive, by no means a disagreeable appearance.

The scene with which we desire to commence the tale opens about seven o'clock on a July morning. On a bench at the foot of the signal staff was seated one of a frame that was naturally large and robust, but which was sensibly beginning to give way, either by age or disease. A glance at the red, bloated face, would suffice to tell a medical man that the habits had more to do with the growing failure of the system than any natural derangement of the physical organs. The face, too, was singularly manly, and had once been handsome, even; nay, it was not altogether without claims to be so considered still: though intemperance was making sad inroads on its comeliness.

This person was about fifty years old, and his air, as well as his attire, denoted a mariner; not a common seaman, nor yet altogether an officer; but one of those of a middle station, who in navies used to form a class by themselves; being of a rank that entitled them to the honors of the quarter-deck, though out of the regular line of promotion. In a word, he wore the unpretending uniform of a master. A century ago, the dress of the English naval officer was exceedingly simple, though more appropriate to the profession, perhaps, than the more showy attire that has since been introduced. Epaulets were not used by any, and the anchor button, with the tint that is called navy blue, and which is meant to represent the deep blue of the ocean, with white facings, composed the principal peculiarities of the dress. The person introduced to the reader, whose name was Dutton, and who was simply the officer in charge of the signal-station, had a certain neatness about his well-worn uniform, his linen, and all of his attire, which showed that some person more interested in such matters than one of his habits was likely to be, had the care of his wardrobe. In this respect, indeed, his appearance was unexceptionable; and there was an air about the whole man which showed that nature, if not education, had intended him for something far better than the being he actually was.

Dutton was waiting, at that early hour, to ascertain, as the veil of mist was raised from the face of the sea, whether a sail might be in sight, that required of him the execution of any of his simple functions. That some one was near by, on the headland, too, was quite evident, by the occasional interchange of speech; though no person but himself was visible. The direction of the sounds would seem to indicate that a man was actually over the brow of the cliff, perhaps a hundred feet removed from the seat occupied by the master.

"Recollect the sailor's maxim, Mr. Wychecombe," called out Mr. Dutton, in a warning voice; "one hand for the king, the other for self! Those cliffs are ticklish places; and really it does seem a little unnatural that a seafaring person like yourself should have so great a passion for flowers, as to risk his neck in order to make a posy!"

"Never fear for me, Mr. Dutton," answered a full, manly voice, that one could have sworn had issued from the chest of youth; "never mind for me; we sailors are used to hanging in the air."

"Aye, with good three-stranded ropes to hold on by, young gentleman. Now his Majesty's government has just made you an officer, there is a sort of obligation to take care of your life, in order that it may be used, and at need, given away, in his service."

"Quite true—quite true, Mr. Dutton; so true, I wonder you think it necessary to remind me of it. I am very grateful to his Majesty's government, and——"

While speaking, the voice seemed to descend, getting at each instant less and less distinct, until, in the end, it became quite inaudible. Dutton looked uneasy, for at that instant a noise was heard, and then it was quite clear some heavy object was falling down the face of the cliff. Now it was that the mariner felt the want of good nerves, and experienced the sense of humiliation which accompanied the consciousness of having destroyed them by his excesses. He trembled in every limb, and, for a moment, was actually unable to rise. A light step at his side, however, drew a glance in that direction, and his eye fell on the form of a lovely girl of nineteen, his own daughter, Mildred.

"I heard you calling to some one, father," said the latter, looking wistfully, but distrustfully, at her parent, as if wondering at his yielding to his infirmity so early in the day; "can I be of service to you?"

"Poor Wychecombe!" exclaimed Dutton. "He went over the cliff in search of a nosegay to offer to yourself, and—and—I fear—greatly fear——"

"What, father?" demanded Mildred, in a voice of horror, the rich color disappearing from a face which it left of the hue of death. "No—no—no—he *cannot* have fallen!"

Dutton bent his head down, drew a long breath, and then seemed to gain more command of his nerves. He was about to rise, when the sound of a horse's feet was heard, and then Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, mounted on a quiet pony, rode slowly up to the flag-staff. It was a common thing for the Baronet to appear on the cliffs early in the morning, but it was not usual for him to come unattended. The instant her eyes fell on the fine form of the venerable old man, Mildred, who seemed to know him well, and to use the familiarity of one confident of being a favorite, exclaimed:

"O! Sir Wycherly, how fortunate—where is Richard?"

"Good morrow, my pretty Milly," answered the Baronet cheerfully, "fortunate or not, here I am, and not a bit flattered that your first question should be after the groom, instead of his master. Now my poor brother, the judge, is dead and gone, I find Mr. Rotherham more and more necessary to me."

"O! dear Sir Wycherly—Mr. Wychecombe—Lieutenant Wychecombe, I mean; the young officer from Virginia—he who was so desperately wounded—and in whose recovery we all took so deep an interest——"

"Well—what of him, child? You surely do not mean to put him on a level with Mr. Rotherham, in the way of religious consolation; and, as for anything else, there is no consanguinity between the Wychecombes of Virginia and my family. He may be a *filius nullius* of the Wychecombes of Wychecombe-Regis, Herts, but has no connection with those of Wychecombe Hall, Devonshire."

"There—there—the cliff! the cliff!" added Mildred, unable, for the moment, to be more explicit.

As the girl pointed toward the precipice, and looked the very image of horror, the good-hearted old Baronet began to get some glimpses of the truth; and, by means of a few words with Dutton, soon knew quite as much as his two companions. Descending from his pony with surprising activity for one of his years, Sir Wycherly was soon on his feet, and a sort of confused consultation between the three succeeded. Neither liked to approach the cliff, which was nearly perpendicular at the extremity of the headland, and was always a trial to the nerves of

those who shrunk from standing on the verge of precipices. They stood like persons paralyzed, until Dutton, ashamed of his weakness, and recalling the thousand lessons in coolness and courage he had received in his own manly profession, made a movement toward advancing to the edge of the cliff, in order to ascertain the real state of the case. The blood returned to the cheeks of Mildred, too, and she again found a portion of her natural spirit raising her courage.

"Stop, father," she said, hastily; "you are infirm, and are in a tremor at this moment. My head is steadier—let me go to the verge of the hill, and learn what has happened."

This was uttered with a forced calmness that deceived her auditors, both of whom, the one from age, and the other from shattered nerves, were certainly in no condition to assume the same office. It required the All-seeing eye which alone can scan the heart, to read all the agonized suspense with which that young and beautiful creature approached the spot where she might command a view of the whole of the side of the fearful declivity, from its giddy summit to the base, where it was washed by the sea. The latter, indeed, could not literally be seen from above, the waves having so far undermined the cliff, as to leave a projection that concealed the point where the rocks and the water came absolutely in contact; the upper portion of the weather-worn rocks falling a little inward, so as to leave a ragged surface that was sufficiently broken to contain patches of earth and verdure, sprinkled with the flowers peculiar to such an exposure. The fog, also, intercepted the sight, giving to the descent the appearance of a fathomless abyss. Had the life of the most indifferent person been in jeopardy, under the circumstances named, Mildred would have been filled with deep awe; but a gush of tender sensations, which had hitherto been pent up in the sacred privacy of her virgin affections, struggled with natural horror, as she trod lightly on the very verge of the declivity, and cast a timid but eager glance beneath. Then she recoiled a step, raised her hands in alarm, and hid her face, as if to shut out some frightful spectacle.

By this time, Dutton's practical knowledge and recollection had returned. As is common with seamen, whose minds contain vidid pictures of the intricate tracery of their vessel's rigging in the darkest nights, his thoughts had flashed athwart all the probable circumstances, and presented a just image of the facts.

"The boy could not be seen had he absolutely fallen, and were there no fog; for the cliff tumbles home, Sir Wycherly," he said, eagerly, unconsciously using a familiar nautical phrase to express his meaning. "He must be clinging to the side of the precipice, and that, too, above the swell of the rocks."

Stimulated by a common feeling, the two men now advanced hastily to the brow of the hill, and there, indeed, as with Mildred herself, a single look sufficed to tell them the whole truth. Young Wychecombe, in leaning forward to pluck a flower, had pressed so hard upon the bit of rock on which a foot rested, as to cause it to break, thereby losing his balance. A presence of mind that amounted almost to inspiration, and a high resolution, alone saved him from being dashed to pieces. Perceiving the rocks to give way, he threw himself forward, and alighted on a narrow shelf, a few feet beneath the place where he had just stood, and at least ten feet removed from it, laterally. The shelf on which he alighted was ragged, and but two or three feet wide. It would have afforded only a check to his fall, had there not fortunately been some shrubs among the rocks above it. By these shrubs the young man caught, actually swinging off in the air, under the impetus of his leap.

Happily the shrubs were too well rooted to give way; and, swinging himself round, with the address of a sailor, the youthful lieutenant was immediately on his feet, in comparative safety. The silence that succeeded was the consequence of the shock he felt, in finding himself so suddenly thrown into this perilous situation. The summit of the cliff was now about six fathoms above his head, and the shelf on which he stood impended

over a portion of the cliff that was absolutely perpendicular, and which might be said to be out of the line of those projections along which he had so lately been idly gathering flowers. It was physically impossible for any human being to extricate himself from such a situation without assistance. This Wychecombe understood at a glance, and he had passed the few minutes that intervened between his fall and the appearance of the party above him, in devising the means necessary to his liberation. As it was, few men, unaccustomed to the giddy elevations of the mast, could have mustered a sufficient command of nerve to maintain a position on the ledge where he stood. Even he could not have continued there, without steadying his form by the aid of the bushes.

As soon as the Baronet and Dutton got a glimpse of the perilous position of young Wychecombe, each recoiled in horror from the sight, as if fearful of being precipitated on top of him. Both, then, actually lay down on the grass, and approached the edge of the cliff again, in that humble attitude, even trembling as they lay at length, with their chins projecting over the rocks, staring downward at the victim. The young man could see nothing of all this; for, as he stood with his back against the cliff, he had not room to turn, with safety, or even to look upward. Mildred, however, seemed to lose all sense of self and of danger, in view of the extremity in which the youth beneath was placed. She stood on the very verge of the precipice, and looked down with a steadiness and impunity that would have been utterly impossible for her to attain under less exciting circumstances; even allowing the young man to catch a glimpse of her rich locks, as they hung about her beautiful face.

"For God's sake, Mildred," shouted the youth, "keep farther from the cliff; I see you, and we can now hear each other without so much risk."

"What can we do to rescue you, Wychecombe?" eagerly asked the girl. "Tell me, I entreat you; for Sir Wycherly and my father are both unnerved!"

"Blessed creature, and *you* are mindful of my danger! But, be not uneasy, Mildred; do as I tell you, and all will yet be well. I hope you hear and understand what I say, dearest girl?"

"Perfectly," returned Mildred, nearly choked by the effort to be calm. "I hear every syllable—speak on."

"Go you then to the signal-halyards; let one end fly loose, and pull upon the other, until the whole line has come down; when that is down, return here, and I will tell you more — but, for Heaven's sake, keep farther from the cliff."

The thought that the rope, small and frail as it seemed, might be of use, flashed on the brain of the girl; and in a moment she was at the staff. Time and again, when liquor incapacitated her father to perform his duty, had Mildred bent-on, and hoisted the signals for him; and thus, happily, she was expert in the use of the halyards. In a moment she had unrove them, and the long line lay in a little pile at her feet.

"'Tis done, Wycherly," she said, again looking over the cliff; "shall I throw you down one end of the rope? but alas! I have not the strength to raise you; and Sir Wycherly and father seem unable to assist me!"

"Do not hurry yourself, Mildred, and all will be well. Go, and put one end of the line around the signal-staff, then put the two ends together, tie them in a knot, and drop them down over my head. Be careful not to come too near the cliff, for——"

The last injunction was useless, Mildred having flown to execute her commission. Her quick mind readily comprehended what was expected of her, and her nimble fingers soon performed their task. Tying a knot in the ends of the line, she did as desired, and the small rope was soon dangling within reach of Wychecombe's arm.

It is not easy to make a landsman understand the confidence which a sailor feels in a rope. Place but a frail and rotten piece of twisted hemp in his hand, and he will risk his person in situations from which he would otherwise recoil in dread.

It required a prodigious effort in the young man to raise his own weight for such a distance by lines so small.—*Two Admirals.*

Accustomed to hang suspended in the air, with ropes only for his foothold, or with ropes to grasp with his hand, his eye gets an intuitive knowledge of what will sustain him, and he unhesitatingly trusts his person to a few seemingly slight strands, that, to one unpracticed, appear wholly unworthy of his confidence. Signal-halyards are ropes smaller than the little finger of a man of any size; but they are usually made with care, and every rope-yarn tells. Wychecombe, too, was aware that these particular halyards were new, for he had assisted in reeving them himself, only the week before. It was owing to this circumstance that they were long enough to reach him; a large allowance for wear and tear having been made in cutting them from the coil. As it was, the ends dropped some twenty feet below the ledge on which he stood.

"All safe, now, Mildred!" cried the young man, in a voice of exultation, the moment his hand caught the two ends of the line, which he immediately passed around his body, beneath the arms, as a precaution against accidents. "All safe now, dearest girl; have no further concern about me."

Mildred drew back, for worlds could not have tempted her to witness the desperate effort that she knew must follow. By this time, Sir Wycherly, who had been an interested witness of all that passed, found his voice, and assumed the office of director.

"Stop, my young namesake," he eagerly cried, when he found that the sailor was about to make an effort to drag his own body to the cliff; "stop; that will never do; let Dutton and me do that much for you, at least. We have seen all that has passed, and are now able to do something."

"No, no, Sir Wycherly—on no account touch the halyards. By hauling them over the top of the rocks, you will probably cut them, or part them, and then I'm lost, without hope!"

"O! Sir Wycherly," said Mildred earnestly, clasping her hands together, as if to enforce the request with prayer; "do not—do not touch the line."

"We had better let the lad manage the matter in his own way," put in Dutton; "he is active, resolute, and a seaman, and will do better for himself than I fear we can do for him. He has got a turn round his body, and is tolerably safe against any slip or mishap."

As the words were uttered, the whole three drew back a short distance and watched the result in intense anxiety. Dutton, however, so far recollected himself as to take an end of the old halyards, which were kept in a chest at the foot of the staff, and to make an attempt to stopper together the two parts of the little rope on which the youth depended, for, should one of the parts of it break, without this precaution, there was nothing to prevent the halyards from running round the staff, and destroying the hold. The size of the halyards rendered this expedient very difficult of attainment, but enough was done to give the arrangement a little more of the air of security. All this time young Wychecombe was making his own preparations on the ledge, and quite out of view; but the tension on the halyards soon announced that his weight was now pendent from them. Mildred's heart seemed ready to leap from her mouth, as she noted each jerk on the lines; and her father watched every new pull, as if he expected the next moment would produce the final catastrophe. It required a prodigious effort in the young man to raise his own weight for such a distance, by lines so small. Had the rope been of any size, the achievement would have been trifling for one of the frame and habits of the sailor, more especially as he could slightly avail himself of his feet, by pressing them against the rocks; but, as it was, he felt as if he were dragging the mountain up after him. At length, his head appeared a few inches above the rocks, but with his feet pressed against the cliff, and his body inclining outward, at an angle of forty-five degrees.

"Help him—help him, father!" exclaimed Mildred, covering her face with her hands, to exclude the sight of Wychecombe's desperate struggles. "If he fall

now, he will be destroyed. Oh! save him, save him, Sir Wycherly!"

But neither of those to whom she appealed could be of any use. The nervous trembling again came over the father; and as for the Baronet, age and inexperience rendered him helpless.

"Have you no rope, Mr. Dutton, to throw over my shoulders?" cried Wychecombe, suspending his exertions in pure exhaustion, still keeping all he had gained, with his face projecting outward, over the abyss beneath, and his head turned toward heaven. "Throw a rope over my shoulders and drag my body in to the cliff."

Dutton showed an eager desire to comply, but his nerves had not yet been excited by the usual potation, and his hand shook in a way to render it questionable whether he could perform even this simple service. But for his daughter, indeed, he would hardly have set about it intelligently. Mildred, accustomed to using the signal-halyards, procured the old line, and handed it to her father, who discovered some of his professional knowledge in his manner of using it. Doubling the halyards twice, he threw the bight over Wychecombe's shoulders, and, aided by Mildred, endeavored to draw the body of the young man upward and toward the cliff. But their united strength was unequal to the task, and wearied with holding on, and, indeed, unable to support his own weight any longer by so small a rope, Wychecombe felt compelled to suffer his feet to drop beneath him, and slid down again upon the ledge. Here, even his vigorous frame shook with its prodigious exertions; and he was compelled to seat himself, on the shelf, and rest with his back against the cliff, to recover his self-command and strength. Mildred uttered a faint shriek as he disappeared, but was too much horror-stricken to approach the verge of the precipice to ascertain his fate.

"Be composed, Milly," said her father, "he is safe, as you may see by the halyards; and to say the truth, the stuff holds on well. So long as the line proves true, the boy can't fall; he has taken a double turn with the end of it round his body. Make your mind easy, girl, for I feel better now, and see my way clear. Don't be uneasy, Sir Wycherly; we'll have the lad safe on *terra firma* again, in ten minutes. I scarce know what has come over me, this morning; but I've not had the command of my limbs as in common. It cannot be fright, for I've seen too many men in danger to be disabled by *that;* and I think, Milly, it must be the rheumatism, of which I've so often spoken, and which I've inherited from my poor mother, dear old soul. Do you know, Sir Wycherly, that rheumatism can be inherited like gout?"

"I dare say it may—I dare say it may, Dutton; but never mind the disease now; get my young namesake back here on the grass, and I will hear all about it. I would give the world that I had not sent Dick to Mr. Rotherham's this morning. Can't we contrive to make the pony pull the boy up?"

"The traces are hardly strong enough for such work, Sir Wycherly. Have a little patience, and I will manage the whole thing, 'ship-shape, and Brister fashion,' as we say at sea. Halloo there, Master Wychecombe—answer my hail, and I will soon get you into deep water."

"I'm safe on the ledge," returned the voice of Wychecombe, from below; "I wish you would look to the signal-halyards, and see they do not chafe against the rocks, Mr. Dutton."

"All right, sir; all right. Slack up, if you please, and let me have all the line you can, without casting off from your body. Keep fast the end for fear of accidents."

In an instant the halyards slackened, and Dutton, who by this time had gained his self-command, though still weak and unnerved by the habits of the last fifteen years, forced the bight along the edge of the cliff, until he had brought it over a projection of the rocks, where it fastened itself. This arrangement caused the line to lead down to the part of the cliffs from which the young man had fallen, and where it was by no means difficult for a steady head and active limbs to move

about and pluck flowers. It consequently remained for Wychecombe merely to regain a footing on that part of the hillside, to ascend to the summit without difficulty.

It is true he was now below the point from which he had fallen, but by swinging himself off laterally, or even by springing, aided by the line, it was not a difficult achievement to reach it, and he no sooner understood the nature of the change that had been made, than he set about attempting it. The confident manner of Dutton encouraged both the Baronet and Mildred, and they drew to the cliff again, standing near the verge, though on the part where the rocks might be descended, with less apprehension of consequences.

As soon as Wychecombe had made all his preparations, he stood on the end of the ledge, tightened the line, looked carefully for a foothold on the other side of the chasm, and made his leap. As a matter of course, the body of the young man swung readily across the space, until the line became perpendicular, and then he found a surface so broken as to render his ascent by no means difficult, aided as he was by the halyards. Scrambling upward, he soon rejected the aid of the line, and sprang upon the headland. At the same instant, Mildred fell senseless on the grass.

CHAPTER III.

"I want a hero—an uncommon want,
When every year and month send forth a new one;
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one."
—BYRON.

IN consequence of the unsteadiness of the father's nerves, the duty of raising Mildred in his arms, and of carrying her to the cottage, devolved on the young man. This he did with a readiness and concern which proved how deep an interest he took in her situation, and with a power of arm which showed that his strength was increased rather than lessened by the condition into which she had fallen. So rapid was his movement, that no one saw the kiss he impressed on the pallid cheek of the sweet girl, or the tender pressure with which he grasped the lifeless form. By the time he reached the door, the motion and air had begun to revive her, and Wychecombe committed her to the care of her alarmed mother, with a few hurried words of explanation. He did not leave the house, however, for a quarter of an hour, except to call out to Dutton that Mildred was reviving, and that he need be under no uneasiness on her account. Why he remained so long, we leave the reader to imagine, for the girl had been immediately taken to her own little chamber, and he saw her no more for several hours.

When our young sailor came out upon the headland again, he found the party near the flagstaff increased to four. Dick, the groom, had returned from his errand, and Tom Wychecombe, the intended heir of the Baronet, was also there, in mourning for his reputed father, the judge. The young man had become a frequent visitor to the station, of late, affecting to imbibe his uncle's taste for sea air, and a view of the ocean.

There had been several meetings between him and his namesake, and each interview was becoming less amicable than the preceding, for a reason that was sufficiently known to the parties. When they met on the present occasion, therefore, the bows they exchanged were haughty and distant, and the glances cast at each other might have been termed hostile, were it not that a sinister irony was blended with that of Tom Wychecombe. Still, the feelings that were uppermost did not prevent the latter from speaking in an apparently friendly manner.

"They tell me, Mr. Wychecombe," observed the judge's heir—for this Tom Wychecombe might legally claim to be—"they tell me, Mr. Wychecombe, that you have been taking a lesson in your trade this morning, by swinging over the cliffs at the end of a rope? Now, that is an exploit more to the taste of an American than to that of an Englishman, I should think. But, I dare say one is compelled to do many things in the colonies that we never dream of at home."

This was said with seeming indifference, though with great art. Sir Wycherly's principal weakness was an oveweening and an ignorant admiration of his own country and all it contained. He was also strongly addicted to that feeling of contempt for the dependencies of the empire, which seems to be inseparable from the political connection between the people of the metropolitan country and their colonies. There must be entire equality for perfect respect in any situation in life; and, as a rule, men always appropriate to their own shares any admitted superiority that may happen to exist on the part of the communities to which they belong. It is on this principle that the tenant of a cock-loft in Paris or London is so apt to feel a high claim to superiority over the occupant of a comfortable abode in a village.

As between England and her North American colonies in particular, this feeling was stronger than is the case usually, on account of the early democratical tendencies of the latter; not that these tendencies had already become the subject of political jealousies, but that they left social impressions which were singularly adapted to bring the colonists into contempt among a people predominant for their own factitious habits, and who are so strongly inclined to view everything, even to principles, through the medium of arbitrary, conventional customs. It must be confessed that the Americans, in the middle of the eighteenth century, were an exceedingly provincial, and in many particulars a narrow-minded people, as well in their opinions as in their habits; nor is the reproach altogether removed at the present day; but the country from which they are derived had not then made the vast strides in civilization, for which it has latterly become so distinguished. The indifference, too, with which all Europe regarded the whole American continent, and to which England herself, though she possessed so large a stake on this side of the Atlantic, formed no material exception, constantly led that quarter of the world into profound mistakes in all its reasoning that was connected with this quarter of the world, and aided in producing the state of feeling to which we have alluded. Sir Wycherly felt and reasoned on the subject of America much as the great bulk of his countrymen felt and reasoned in 1745; the exceptions existing only among the enlightened, and those whose particular duties rendered more correct knowledge necessary, and not always among them. It is said that the English minister conceived the idea of taxing America, from the circumstance of seeing a wealthy Virginian lose a large sum at play, a sort of *argumentum ad hominem* that brought with it a very dangerous conclusion to apply to the sort of people with whom he had to deal. Let this be as it might, there is no more question, that at the period of our tale, the profoundest ignorance concerning America existed generally in the mother country, than there is that the profoundest respect existed in America for everything English. Truth compels us to add, that in spite of all that has passed, the cisatlantic portion of the weakness has longest endured the assaults of time and of an increased intercourse.

Young Wycherly, as is ever the case, was keenly alive to any insinuations that might be supposed to reflect on the portion of the empire of which he was a native.

He considered himself an Englishman, it is true; was thoroughly loyal; and was every way disposed to sustain the honor and interests of the seat of authority; but when questions were raised between Europe and America, he was an American; as, in America itself, he regarded himself as purely a Virginian, in contradistinction to all other colonies. He understood the intended sarcasm of Tom Wychecombe, but smothered his resentment, out of respect to the Baronet, and perhaps a little influenced by the feelings in which he had been so lately indulging.

"Those gentlemen who are disposed to fancy such things of the colonies would do well to visit that part of the world," he answered calmly, "before they express their opinions too loudly, lest they should say something future observation might make them wish to recall."

"True, my young friend—quite true," put in the Baronet, with the kindest possible intentions. "True, as gospel. We never know anything of matters about which we do nothing; that we old men must admit, Master Dutton, and I should think Tom must see its force. It would be unreasonable to expect to find everything as comfortable in America as we have it here, in England; nor do I suppose the Americans in general would be as likely to get over a cliff as an Englishman. However, there are exceptions to all general rules, as my poor brother James used to say, when he saw occasion to find fault with the sermon of a prelate. I believe you did not know my poor brother, Dutton; he must have been killed about the time you were born—St. James, I used to call him, although my brother Thomas, the judge that was, Tom's father, there—said he was St. James the Less."

"I believe the Rev. Mr. Wychecombe was dead before I was of an age to remember his virtues, Sir Wycherly," said Dutton, respectfully; "though I have often heard my own father speak of all your honored family."

"Yes, your father, Dutton, was the attorney of the next town, and we all knew him well. You have done quite right to come back among us to spend the close of your own days. A man is never as well off as when he is thriving in his native soil; more especially when the soil is old England and Devonshire. You are not one of us, young gentleman, though your name happens to be Wychecombe; but then we are none of us accountable for our own births, or birthplaces."

This truism, which is in the mouths of thousands while it is in the hearts of scarcely any, was well meant by Sir Wycherly, however plainly expressed. It merely drew from the youth the simple answer that "he was born in the colonies, and had colonists for parents;" a fact that the others had heard already some ten or a dozen times.

"It is a little singular, Mr. Wychecombe, that you should bear both of my names, and yet be no relative," continued the Baronet. "Now, Wycherly came into our family from old Sir Hildebrand Wycherly, who was slain at Bosworth Field, and whose only daughter, my ancestor, and Tom's ancestor, there, married. Since that day, Wycherly has been a favorite name among us. I do not think that the Wychecombes of Herts ever thought of calling a son Wycherly, although, as my poor brother the judge used to say, they were related, but of the half-blood only. I suppose your father taught you what is meant by being of the half-blood, Thomas?"

Tom Wychecombe's face became the color of scarlet, and he cast an uneasy glance at all present; expecting in particular to meet with a look of exultation in the eyes of the lieutenant. He was greatly relieved, however, at finding that neither of the three meant or understood more than was simply expressed. As for his uncle, he had not the smallest intention of making any allusion to the peculiarity of his nephew's birth; and the other two, in common with the world, supposed the reputed heir to be legitimate. Gathering courage from the looks of those around him, Tom answered, with a steadiness that prevented his agitation from being detected—

"Certainly, my dear sir; my excellent parent forgot nothing that he thought might be useful to me, in maintaining my rights and the honor of the family, hereafter. I very well understand that the Wychecombes of Hertfordshire have no claims on us; nor, indeed, any Wychecombe who is not descended from my respectable grandfather, the late Sir Wycherly."

"He must have been an *early* instead of a *late* Sir Wycherly, rather, Mr. Thomas," put in Dutton, laughing at his own conceit; "for I can remember no other than the honorable Baronet before us, in the last fifty years."

"Quite true, Dutton—very true," rejoined the person last alluded to. "As true as that 'Time and tide wait for no man.' We understand the meaning of such things on the coast here. It was half a century last October, since I succeeded my respected parent; but it will

not be another half century before some one will succeed me!"

Sir Wycherly was a hale, hearty man for his years, but he had no unmanly dread of his end. Still he felt it could not be very distant, having already numbered fourscore and four years. Nevertheless, there were certain phrases of usage, that Dutton did not see fit to forget on such an occasion, and he answered accordingly, turning to look at and admire the still ruddy countenance of the Baronet, by way of giving emphasis to his words.

"You will yet see half of us in our graves, Sir Wycherly," said he, "and remain an active man. Though I dare say another half century will bring most of us up there. Even Mr. Thomas, here, and your young namesake can hardly hope to run out more line than that. Well, as for myself, I only desire to live through this war, that I may again see his Majesty's arms triumphant; though they do tell me that we are in for a good thirty years' struggle. Wars *have* lasted as long as that, Sir Wycherly, and I don't see why this may not, as well as another."

"Very true, Dutton; it is not only possible, but probable; and I trust both you and I may live to see our flower-hunter, here, a post-captain, at least—though it would be wishing almost too much to expect to see him an admiral. There has been *one* admiral of the name, and I confess I should like to see another!"

"Has not Mr. Thomas a brother in the service?" demanded the master; "I had thought that my lord, the judge, had given us one of his young gentlemen."

"He thought of it; but the army got both of the boys, as it turned out. Gregory was to be the midshipman; my poor brother intending him for a sailor from the first, and so giving him the name that was once borne by the unfortunate relative we lost by shipwreck. I wished him to call one of the lads James, after St. James; but, somehow, I never could persuade Thomas to see all the excellence of that pious young man."

Dutton was a little embarrassed, for St. James had left anything but a goodly savor behind him; and he was about to fabricate a tolerably bold assertion to the contrary, rather than incur the risk of offending the lord of the manor, when, luckily, a change in the state of the fog afforded him a favorable opportunity of bringing about an apposite change in the subject. During the whole of the morning the sea had been invisible from the headland, a dense body of vapor resting on it, far as the eye could reach; veiling the whole expanse with a single white cloud. The lighter portions of the vapor had at first floated around the headland, which could not have been seen at any material distance; but all had been gradually settling down into a single mass, that now rose within twenty feet of the summit of the cliffs. The hour was still quite early, but the sun was gaining force, and it speedily drank up all the lighter particles of the mist, leaving a clear, bright atmosphere above the feathery bank, through which objects might be seen for miles. There was what seamen call a "fanning breeze," or just wind enough to cause the light sails of a ship to swell and collapse, under the double influence of the air and the motion of the hull, imitating in a slight degree the vibrations of that familiar appliance of the female toilet. Dutton's eye had caught a glance of the loftiest sail of a vessel, above the fog, going through this very movement; and it afforded him the release he desired, by enabling him to draw the attention of his companions to the same object.

"See, Sir Wycherly—see, Mr. Wychecombe," he cried, eagerly, pointing in the direction of the sail; "yonder is some of the king's canvas coming into our roadstead, or I am no judge of the act of a man-of-war's royal. It is a large bit of cloth, too, Mr. Lieutenant, for a sail so lofty."

"It is a two-decker's royal, Master Dutton," returned the young sailor; "and now you see the fore and main, separately, as the ship keeps away."

"Well," put in Sir Wycherly, in a resigned manner; "here have I lived fourscore years on this coast, and, for the life of me, I have never been able to tell a fore-royal from a back-royal; or a mizzen

head-stay from a head mizzen-stay. They are the most puzzling things imaginable; and now I cannot discover how you know that yonder sail, which I see plain enough, is a royal, any more than it is a jib!"

Dutton and the lieutenant smiled, but Sir Wycherly's simplicity had a cast of truth and nature about it, that deterred most people from wishing to ridicule him. Then the rank, fortune, and local interest of the Baronet counted for a good deal on all such occasions.

"Here is another fellow, farther east," cried Dutton, still pointing with a finger; "and every inch as big as his consort! Ah! it does my eyes good to see our roadstead come into notice, in this manner, after all I have said and done in its behalf—but, who have we here—a brother chip, by his appearance; I dare say some idler, who has been sent ashore with dispatches."

"There is another fellow farther east, and every inch as big as his consort," said Wychecombe, as we shall call our lieutenant, in order to distinguish him from Tom of the same name, repeating the very words of Dutton, with an application and readiness that almost amounted to wit, pointing, in his turn, at two strangers who were ascending to the station by a path that led from the beach. "Certainly both these gentlemen are in his Majesty's service, and they have probably just landed from the ships in the offing."

The truth of this conjecture was apparent to Dutton at a glance. As the strangers joined each other, the one last seen proceeded in advance; and there was something in his years, the confident manner in which he approached, and his general appearance, that induced both the sailors to believe he might be the commander of one of the ships that had just come in view.

"Good-morrow, gentlemen," commenced this person, as soon as near enough to salute the party at the foot of the flag-staff; "good-morrow to ye all. I'm glad to meet you, for it's but a Jacob's ladder, this path of yours, through the ravine in the cliffs. Hey! why, Atwood," looking around him at the sea of vapor, in surprise, "what the devil has become of the fleet?"

"It is lost in the fog, sir; we are above it, here; when more on a level with the ships we could see, or fancy we saw, more of them than we do now."

"Here are the upper sails of two heavy ships, sir," observed Wychecombe, pointing in the direction of the vessels already seen; "ay, and yonder are two more; nothing but the royals are visible."

"Two more! I left eleven two-deckers, three frigates, a sloop, and a cutter in sight, when I got into the boat. You might have covered 'em all with a pocket-handkerchief, hey, Atwood?"

"They were certainly in close order, sir, but I'll not take it on myself to say quite as near together as that."

"Ay, you're a dissenter by trade, and never will believe in a miracle. Sharp work, gentlemen, to get up such a hill as this, after fifty."

"It is indeed, sir," answered Sir Wycherly, kindly. "Will you do us the favor to take a seat among us, and rest yourself after so violent an exertion? The cliff is hard enough to ascend, even when one keeps the path; though here is a young gentleman who had a fancy just now to go down it, without a path; and that, too, merely that a pretty girl might have a nosegay on her breakfast-table."

The stranger looked intently at Sir Wycherly for a moment, then glanced his eye at the groom and the pony, after which he took a survey of Tom Wychecombe, the lieutenant, and the master. He was a man accustomed to look about him, and he understood, by that rapid glance, the characters of all he surveyed, with perhaps the exception of that of Tom Wychecombe; and even of that he formed a tolerably shrewd conjecture. Sir Wycherly he immediately set down as the squire of the adjacent estate; Dutton's situation he hit exactly, conceiving him to be a wornout master, who was employed to keep the signal-station; while he understood Wychecombe, by his undress, and air, to be a sea-lieutenant in the king's service.

Tom Wychecombe he thought it quite likely might be the son and heir of the lord of the manor, both being in mourning; though he decided in his own mind that there was not the smallest family likeness between them. Bowing with the courtesy of a man who knew how to acknowledge a civility, he took the proffered seat at Sir Wycherly's side without farther ceremony.

"We must carry the young fellow to sea with us, sir," rejoined the stranger, "and that will cure him of looking for flowers in such ticklish places. His Majesty has need of us all, in this war; and I trust, young gentleman, you have not been long ashore, among the girls."

"Only long enough to make a cure of a pretty smart hurt, received in cutting out a lugger from the opposite coast," answered Wychecombe, with sufficient modesty, and yet with sufficient spirit.

"Lugger!—ha! what, Atwood? You surely do not mean, young gentleman, *La Voltiguse?*"

"That was the name of the craft, sir—we found her in the roads of Groix."

"And then I've the pleasure of seeing Mr. Wychecombe, the young officer who led in the attack?"

This was said in a most flattering warmth of manner, the stranger even rising and removing his hat, as he uttered the words with a heartiness that showed how much his feelings were in unison with what he said.

"I am Mr. Wychecombe, sir," answered the other, blushing to the temples, and returning the salute; "though I had not the honor of leading; one of the lieutenants of our ship being in another boat."

"Yes—I know all that; but he was beaten off, while you boarded and did the work. What have my lord commissioners done in the matter?"

"All that is necessary, so far as I am concerned, sir, I do assure you; having sent me a commission the very next week. I only wish they had been equally generous to Mr. Walton, who received a severe wound also, and behaved as well as a man could behave."

"That would not be so wise, Mr. Wychecombe, since it would be rewarding a failure," returned the stranger coldly. "Success is all in all, in war. Ah! there the fellows begin to show themselves, Atwood."

This remark drew all eyes, again, toward the sea, where a sight now presented itself that was really worthy of a passing notice. The vapor appeared to have become packed into a mass of some eighty or a hundred feet in height, leaving a perfectly clear atmosphere above it. In the clear air were visible the upper spars and canvas of the entire fleet mentioned by the stranger; sixteen sail in all. There were the eleven two-deckers, and the three frigates, rising in pyramids of canvas, still fanning in toward the anchorage, which in that roadstead was within pistol-shot of the shore; while the royals and upper part of the top-gallant sails of the sloop seemed to stand on the surface of the fog, like a monument. After a moment's pause, Wychecombe discovered even the head of the cutter's royal-mast, with the pennant lazily fluttering ahead of it, partly concealed in vapor. The fog seemed to settle, instead of rising, though it evidently rolled along the face of the waters, putting the whole scene in motion. It was not long ere the tops of the ships of the line became invisible, and then living beings were for the first time seen in the moving masses.

"I suppose we offer just such a sight to the topmen of the ships, as they offer to us," observed the stranger. "They *must* see this headland and flag-staff, Mr. Wychecombe; and there can be no danger of their standing in too far?"

"I should think not, sir; certainly the man aloft can see the cliffs above the fog, as we see the vessel's spars. Ha! Mr. Dutton, there is a rear-admiral's flag flying on board the ship farthest to the eastward."

"So I see, sir; and by looking at the third vessel on the western side of the line, you will find a bit of square bunting at the fore, which will tell you there is a vice-admiral beneath it."

"Quite true!" exclaimed Wychecombe, who was ever enthusiastic on

matters relating to his profession; "a vice-admiral of the red, too; which is the next stop to being a full-admiral. This must be the fleet of Sir Digby Downes!"

"No, young gentleman," returned the stranger, who perceived by the glance of the other's eye that a question was indirectly put to himself, "it is the southern squadron; and the vice-admiral's flag, you see, belongs to Sir Gervaise Oakes. Admiral Bluewater is on board the ship that carries a flag at the mizzen."

"Those two officers always go together, Sir Wycherly," added the young man. "Whenever we hear the name of Sir Gervaise, that of Bluewater is sure to accompany it. Such a union in service is delightful to witness."

"Well may they go in company, Mr. Wychecombe," returned the stranger, betraying a little emotion. "Oakes and Bluewater were reefers together, under old Bresthook, in the *Mermaid;* and when the first was made a lieutenant into the *Squid,* the last followed as a mate. Oakes was first of the *Briton,* in her action with the Spanish frigates, and Bluewater third. For that affair Oakes got a sloop, and his friend went with him as his first. The next year they had the luck to capture a heavier ship than their own, when, for the first time in their service, the two young men were separated; Oakes getting a frigate, and Bluewater getting the *Squid.* Still they cruised in company, until the senior was sent in command of a flying squadron, with a broad pennant, when the junior, who by this time was post, received his old messmate on board his own frigate. In that manner they served together, down to the hour when the first hoisted his flag. From that time the two old seamen have never been parted; Bluewater acting as the admiral's captain, until he got the square bunting himself. The vice-admiral has never led the van of a fleet that the rear-admiral did not lead the rear division; and, now that Sir Gervaise is a commander-in-chief, you see his friend, Dick Bluewater, is cruising in his company."

While the stranger was giving this account of the Two Admirals, in a half serious, half jocular manner, the eyes of his companions were on him. He was a middle-sized, red-faced man, with an aquiline nose, a light-blue animated eye, and a mouth which denoted more of the habits and care of refinement than either his dress or his ordinary careless mien. A great deal is said about the aristocracy of the ears, and the hands, and the feet; but of all the features, or other appliances of the human frame, the mouth and the nose have the greatest influence in producing an impression of gentility. This was peculiarly the case with the stranger, whose beak, like that of an ancient galley, gave the promise of a stately movement, and whose beautiful teeth and winning smile often relieved the expression of a countenance that was not unfrequently stern. As he ceased speaking, Dutton rose, in a studied manner, raised his hat entirely from his head, bowed his head nearly to a right angle and said:

"Unless my memory is treacherous, I believe I have the honor to see Rear-Admiral Bluewater himself; I was a mate in the *Medway,* when he commanded the *Chloe*; and, unless five and twenty years have made more changes than I think probable, he is now on the hill."

"Your memory is a bad one, Mr. Dutton, and your hill has on it a much worse man, in all respects, than Admiral Bluewater. They say that man and wife, from living together, and thinking alike, having the same affections, loving the same objects, or sometimes hating them, get in time to look alike; hey, Atwood? It may be that I am growing like Bluewater, on the same principle; but this is the first time I ever heard the thing suggested. I am Sir Gervaise Oakes, at your service, sir."

The bow of Dutton was now much lower than before, while young Wychecombe uncovered himself, and Sir Wycherly arose and paid his compliments cordially, introducing himself, and offering the Admiral and all his officers the hospitality of the Hall.

"Aye, this is straight-forward and hearty, and in the good old English manner!" exclaimed the Admiral, when he

had returned the salutes, and cordially thanked the Baronet. "One might land in Scotland, now, anywhere between the Tweed and John o'Groats house, and not be asked so much as to eat an oaten cake; hey, Atwood? always excepting the mountain dew."

"You will have your fling at my poor countrymen, Sir Gervaise, and so there is no more to be said on the subject," returned the secretary, for such was the rank of the Admiral's companion. "I might feel hurt at times, did I not know that you get as many Scotsmen about you, in your own ship, as you can; and that a fleet is all the better, in your judgment, for having every other captain from the land o' cakes."

"Did you ever hear the like of that, Sir Wycherly? Because I stick to a man I like, he accuses me of having a predilection for his whole country. Here's Atwood, now; he was my clerk, when in a sloop; and he has followed me to the *Plantagenet*, and because I do not throw him overboard, he wishes to make it appear half Scotland is in her hold."

"Well, there are the surgeon, the purser, one of the mates, one of the marine officers, and the fourth lieutenant, to keep me company, Sir Gervaise," said the secretary, smiling like one accustomed to his superior's jokes, and who cared very little about them. "When you send us all back to Scotland, I'm thinking there will be many a good vacancy to fill."

"The Scotch make themselves very useful, Sir Gervaise," put in Sir Wycherly, by way of smoothing the matter over; "and now we have a Brunswick prince on the throne, we Englishmen have less jealousy of them than formerly. I am sure I should be happy to see all the gentlemen mentioned by Mr. Atwood, at Wychecombe Hall."

"There, you're all well berthed while the fleet lies in these roads. Sir Wycherly, in the name of Scotland, I thank you. But what an extr'onary (for so admirals pronounced the word a hundred years ago) scene this is, hey, Atwood? Many a time I have seen the hulls of ships when their spars were hid in the fog; but I do not remember ever to have seen before sixteen sets of masts and sails moving about on vapor, without a single hull to uphold them. The tops of all the two-decked ships are as plainly to be seen as if the air were without a particle of vapor, while all below the cat-harpings is hid in the cloud as thick as the smoke of battle. I do not half like Bluewater's standing in so far; perhaps, Mr. Dutton, they cannot see the cliffs, for I assure you we did not, until quite close under them. We went altogether by the lead, the masters feeling their way like so many blind beggars!"

"We always keep that nine-pounder loaded, Sir Gervaise," returned the master, "in order to warn vessels when they are getting near enough in; and if Mr. Wychecombe, who is younger than I, will run to the house and light this match, I will prime, and we may give 'em warning where they are in less than a minute."

The Admiral gave a ready assent to this proposition, and the respective parties immediately set about putting it in execution. Wychecombe hastened to the house to light the match, glad of an opportunity to inquire after Mildred; while Dutton produced a priming-horn from a sort of arm-chest that stood near the gun, and put the latter in a condition to be discharged. The young man was absent but a minute, and when all was ready, he turned toward the Admiral in order to get the signal to proceed.

"Let 'em have it, Mr. Wychecombe," cried Sir Gervaise, smiling; "it will wake Bluewater up; perhaps he may favor us with a broadside, by way of retort."

The match was applied, and the report of the gun succeeded. Then followed a pause of more than a minute; when the fog lifted around the *Cæsar*, the ship that wore a rear-admiral's flag, a flash like lightning was seen glancing in the midst, and then came the bellowing of a piece of heavy ordnance. Almost at the same instant three little flags appeared at the masthead of the *Cæsar*, for previously to quitting his own ship, Sir Gervaise had sent a message to his friend, requesting him to take care of the fleet. This was

the signal to anchor. The effect of all this, as seen from the height, was exceedingly striking. As yet, not a single hull had become visible, the fog remaining packed upon the water, in a way to conceal even the lower yards of the two-deckers.

All above was bright, distinct, and so near as almost to render it possible to distinguish persons. There everything was vivid, while a sort of supernatural mystery veiled all beneath. Each ship had an officer aloft to look out for signals, and no sooner had the *Cæsar* opened her three little flags, which had long been suspended in black balls, in readiness for this service, than the answers were seen floating at the masthead of each of the vessels. Then commenced a spectacle still more curious than that which those on the cliff had so long been regarding with interest. Ropes began to move, and the sails were drawn up in festoons, apparently without the agency of hands. Cut off from a seeming communication with the ocean, or the hulls, the spars of the different ships appeared to be instinct with life; each machine playing its own part independently of the others, but all having the same object in view. In a few minutes the canvas was hauled up, and the whole fleet was swinging to the anchors. Presently head after head was thrown out of the fog, the upper yards were alive with men, and the sails were handed. Next came the squaring of the yards, though this was imperfectly done, and a good deal by guess-work. The men came down, and there lay a noble fleet at anchor, with nothing visible to those on the cliffs but their top-hamper and upper spars.

Sir Gervaise Oakes had been so much struck and amused with a sight that to him happened to be entirely novel, that he did not speak during the whole process of anchoring. Indeed, many a man might pass his life at sea, and never witness such a scene; but those who have, know that it is one of the most beautiful and striking spectacles connected with the wonders of the great deep.

By this time the sun had got so high as to begin to stir the fog, and streams of vapor were shooting up from the beach, like smoke rising from coalpits. The wind increased, too, and rolled the vapor before it, and in less than ten minutes the veil was removed; ship after ship coming out in plain view, until the entire fleet was seen riding in the roadstead, in its naked and distinct proportions.

"Now, Bluewater is a happy fellow," exclaimed Sir Gervaise. "He sees his great enemy, the land, and knows how to deal with it."

"I thought the French were the great and natural enemies of every British sailor," observed Sir Wycherly, simply, but quite to the point.

"Hum—there's truth in that too. But the land is an enemy to be feared, while the Frenchman is not—hey, Atwood?"

It was indeed a goodly sight to view the fine fleet that now lay anchored beneath the cliffs of Wychecombe. Sir Gervaise Oakes was in that period considered a successful naval commander, and was a favorite, both at the admiralty and with the nation. His popularity extended to the most distant colonies of England, in nearly all of which he had served with zeal and credit. But we are not writing of an age of nautical wonders, like that which succeeded at the close of the century. The French and Dutch, and even the Spaniards, were then all formidable as naval powers; for revolutions and changes had not destroyed their maritime corps, nor had the consequent naval ascendency of England annihilated their navigation; the two great causes of the subsequent apparent invincibility of the latter power. Battles at sea, in that day, were warmly contested, and were frequently fruitless, more especially when fleets were brought in opposition. The single combats were usually more decisive, though the absolute success of the British flag was far from being as much a matter of course as it subsequently became. In a word, the science of naval warfare had not made those great strides which marked the career of England in the end, nor had it retrograded among her enemies, to the point which appears to have rendered their defeat nearly certain. Still Sir Gervaise was a successful officer; having captured

several single ships in bloody encounters, and having actually led fleets with credit, in four or five great battles of the times; besides being second and third in command, on various similar occasions. His own ship was certain to be engaged, let what would happen to the others. Equally as captains and as flag officers, the nation had become familiar with the names of Oakes and Bluewater as men ever to be found sustaining each other in the thickest of the fight.

It may be well to add here, that both these favorite seamen were men of family, or at least what was considered men of family among the mere gentry of England; Sir Gervaise being a baronet by inheritance, while his friend actually belonged to one of those naval lines which furnishes admirals for generations; his father having worn a white flag at the main; and his grandfather having been actually ennobled for his services, dying vice-admiral of England. These fortuitous circumstances perhaps rendered both so much the greater favorites at court.

CHAPTER IV.

"All with you; except three
And duty, and our leader Israel,
Who is expected momently."
—MARINO FALERO.

As his fleet was safely anchored, and that, too, in beautiful order, in spite of the fog, Sir Gervaise Oakes showed a disposition to pursue what are termed ulterior views.

"This has been a fine sight—certainly a very fine sight; such as an old seaman loves; but there must be an end to it," he said. "You will excuse me, Sir Wycherly, but the movements of a fleet always have interest in my eyes, and it is seldom that I get such a bird's-eye view of those of my own; no wonder it has made me a somewhat unreflecting intruder."

"Make no apologies, Sir Gervaise, I beg of you; for none are needed, on any account. Though this headland does belong to the Wychecombe property, it is fairly leased to the crown, and none have a better right to occupy it than his Majesty's servants. The Hall is a little more private, it is true, but even that has no door that will close up on our gallant naval defenders. It is but a short walk, and nothing will make me happier than to show you the way to my poor dwelling, and to see you as much at home under its roof, as you could be in the cabin of the *Plantagenet*."

"If anything could make me as much at home in a house as in a ship, it would be so hearty a welcome; and I intend to accept your hospitality in the very spirit in which it is offered. Atwood and I have landed to send off some important dispatches to the First Lord, and we will thank you for putting us in the way of doing it, in the safest and most expeditious manner. Curiosity and surprise have already occasioned the loss of half an hour; while a soldier, or a sailor, should never lose half a minute."

"Is a courier who knows the country well, needed, Sir Gervaise?" the lieutenant demanded, modestly, though with an interest that showed he was influenced only by zeal for the service.

The Admiral looked at him intently, for a moment, and seemed pleased with the hint implied in the question.

"Can you ride?" asked Sir Gervaise, smiling. "I could have brought half-a-dozen youngsters ashore with me; but, besides the doubts about getting a horse—a chaise, I take it, is out of the question here—I was afraid the lads might disgrace themselves on horseback."

"This must be said in pleasantry, Sir Gervaise," returned Wychecombe; "he would be a strange Virginian, at least, who does not know how to ride!"

"And a strange Englishman, too, Bluewater would say; and yet I never see the fellow straddle a horse that I did not wish it were a studding-sail-boom run out to leeward! We sailors *fancy* we ride, Mr. Wychecombe, but it is some such fancy as a marine has for the fore-topmast-crosstrees. Can a horse be had, to go as far as the nearest post-office that sends off a daily mail?"

"That can it, Sir Gervaise," put in Sir Wycherly. "Here is Dick mounted on as good a hunter as is to be found in England; and I'll answer for my young namesake's willingness to put the animal's mettle to the proof. Our little mail has just left Wychecombe for the next twenty-four hours, but by pushing the beast, there will be time to reach the road in season for the great London mail, which passed the nearest market-town at noon. It is but a gallop of ten miles and back, and that I'll answer for Mr. Wychecombe's ability to do, and to join us at dinner by four."

Young Wychecombe expressing his readiness to perform all this, and even more at need, the arrangement was soon made. Dick was dismounted, the lieutenant got his dispatches and his instructions, took his leave, and had galloped out of sight, in the next five minutes. The Admiral then declared himself at liberty for the day, accepting the invitation of Sir Wycherly to breakfast and dine at the Hall, in the same spirit of frankness as that in which it had been given. Sir Wycherly was so spirited as to refuse the aid of his pony, but insisted on walking through the village and park to his dwelling, though the distance was more than a mile. Just as they were quitting the signal-station, the old man took the Admiral aside, and in an earnest, but respectful manner, disburdened his mind to the following effect.

"Sir Gervaise," he said, "I am no sailor as you know, and least of all do I bear his Majesty's commission in the navy, though I am in the county commission as a justice of the peace; so, if I make any little mistake, you will have the goodness to overlook it, for I know that the etiquette of the quarter-deck is a very serious matter, and is not to be trifled with; but here is Dutton, as good a fellow in his way as lives—his father was a sort of a gentleman, too, having been the attorney of the neighborhood, and the old man was accustomed to dine with me forty years ago——"

"I believe I understand you, Sir Wycherly," interrupted the Admiral; "and I thank you for the attention you wish to pay my prejudices; but you are the master of Wychecombe, and I should feel myself a troublesome intruder, indeed, did you not ask whom you please to dine at your own table."

"That's not quite it, Sir Gervaise, though you have not gone far wide of the mark. Dutton is only a master, you know; and it seems that a master on board a ship is a very different thing from a master on shore; so Dutton himself has often told me."

"Aye, Dutton is right enough as regards a king's ship, though the two officers are pretty much the same, when other craft are alluded to. But, my dear Sir Wycherly, an admiral is not disgraced by keeping company with a boatswain, if the latter is an honest man. It is true we have our customs, and what we call our quarter-deck and forward officers; which is court end and city, on board ship; but a master belongs to the first, and the master of the *Plantagenet*, Sandy McYarn, dines with me once a month, as regularly as he enters a new word at the top of his log-book. I beg, therefore, you will extend your hospitality to whom you please—or—" the Admiral hesitated, as he cast a good-natured glance at the master, who stood still uncovered, waiting for his superior to move away; "or, perhaps, Sir Wycherly, you would permit *me* to ask a friend to make one of our party."

"That's just it, Sir Gervaise," returned the kind-hearted Baronet; "and Dutton will be one of the happiest fellows in Devonshire. I wish we could have Mrs. Dutton and Milly, and then the table would look what my poor brother James—St. James I used to call him—what the Rev. James Wychecombe was accustomed to term, mathematical. He said a table should have all its sides and angles duly filled. James was a most agreeable companion, Sir Gervaise, and, in divinity, he would not have turned his back on one of the apostles, I do verily believe!"

The Admiral bowed, and turning to the master, he invited him to be of the party at the hall, in the manner which one long accustomed to render his civilities agree-

able by a sort of professional off-handed way, well knew how to assume.

"Sir Wycherly has insisted that I shall consider his table as set in my own cabin," he continued; "and I know of no better manner of proving my gratitude, than by taking him at his word, and filling it with guests that will be agreeable to us both. I believe there is a Mrs. Dutton, and a Miss—a—a—a——"

"Milly," put in the Baronet, eagerly; "Miss Mildred Dutton—the daughter of our good friend Dutton, here, and a young lady that would do credit to the gayest drawing-room in London."

"You perceive, sir, that our kind host anticipates the wishes of an old bachelor, as it might be by instinct, and desires the company of the ladies also. Miss Mildred will, at least, have two young men to do homage to her beauty and *three* old ones to sigh in the distance—hey, Atwood?"

"Mildred, as Sir Wycherly knows, sir, has been a little disturbed this morning," returned Dutton, putting on his best manner for the occasion; "but, I feel no doubt, will be too grateful for this honor, not to exert herself to make a suitable return. As for my wife, gentlemen——"

"And what is to prevent Mrs. Dutton from being one of the party?" interrupted Sir Wycherly, as he observed the husband to hesitate; "she sometimes favors me with her company."

"I rather think she will to-day, Sir Wycherly, if Mildred is well enough to go; the good woman seldom lets her daughter stray far from her apron strings. She keeps her, as I tell her, within the sweep of her own hawse, Sir Gervaise."

"So much the wiser she, Master Dutton," returned the Admiral, pointedly. "The best pilot for a young woman is a good mother; and now you have a fleet in your roadstead, I need not tell a seaman of your experience that you are on pilot ground—hey, Atwood?"

Here the parties separated, Dutton remaining uncovered until his superior had turned the corner of his little cottage, and was fairly out of sight. Then the master entered his dwelling to prepare his wife and daughter for the honors they had in perspective. Before he executed this duty, however, the unfortunate man opened what he called a locker—what a housewife would term a cupboard—and fortified his nerves with a strong draught of pure Nantes; a liquor that no hostilities, custom-house duties, or national antipathies, have ever been able to bring into general disrepute in the British Islands. In the meantime the party of the two Baronets pursued its way toward the hall.

The village, or hamlet of Wychecombe, lay about half-way between the station and the residence of the lord of the manor. It was an exceedingly rural and retired collection of mean houses, possessing neither physician, apothecary, nor attorney to give it importance. A small inn, two or three shops of the humblest kind, and some twenty cottages of laborers and mechanics composed the place, which, at that early day, had not even a chapel, or a conventicle, dissent not having made much progress then in England. The parish church, one of the old edifices of the time of the Henries, stood quite alone, in a field, more than a mile from the place; and the vicarage, a respectable abode, was just on the edge of the park, fully half a mile more distant.

In short, Wychecombe was one of those places which was so far on the decline that few or no traces of any little importance it may have once possessed were any longer to be discovered; and it had sunk entirely into a hamlet that owed its allowed claims to be marked on the maps, and to be noted in the gazetteers, altogether to its antiquity and the name it had given to one of the oldest knightly families in England.

No wonder, then, that the arrival of a fleet under the head, produced a great excitement in the little village. The anchorage was excellent, so far as the bottom was concerned, but it could scarcely be called a roadstead in any other point of view, since there was shelter against no wind but that which blew directly off shore, which happened to be a wind that did not prevail in that part of the island. Occasionally, a small cruiser would come-to, in the offing, and a few frigates had lain at single anchors in the roads, for a tide or

so, in waiting for a change of weather; but this was the first fleet that had been known to moor under the cliffs within the memory of man. The fog had prevented the honest villagers from ascertaining the unexpected honor that had been done them, until the reports of two guns reached their ears, when the important intelligence spread with due rapidity over the entire adjacent country.

Although Wychecombe did not lie in actual view of the sea, by the time the party of Sir Wycherly entered the hamlet its little street was already crowded with visitors from the fleet; every vessel having sent at least one boat ashore, and many of them some three or four. Captain's and gun-room stewards, midshipmen's foragers, loblolly boys, and other similar harpies, were out in scores; for this was a part of the world in which bumboats were unknown; and if the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must fain go to the mountain. Half an hour had sufficed to exhaust all the unsophisticated simplicity of the hamlet; and milk, eggs, fresh butter, soft-tomme, vegetables, and such fruits as were ripe, had already risen quite one hundred per cent. in the market.

Sir Gervaise had called his force the southern squadron, from the circumstance of its having been cruising in the Bay of Biscay for the last six months. This was a wild winter-station, the danger from the elements greatly surpassing any that could well be anticipated from the enemy. The duty, notwithstanding, had been well and closely performed; several West India and one valuable East India convoy had been effectually protected, as well as a few straggling frigates of the enemy picked up; but the service had been excessively laborious to all engaged in it, and replete with privations. Most of those who now landed had not trod *terra firma* for half a year, and it was not wonderful that all the officers, whose duty did not confine them to the vessels, gladly seized the occasion to feast their senses with the verdure and odors of their native island. Quite a hundred guests of this character were also pouring into the streets of Wychecombe, or spreading themselves among the surrounding farm-houses; flirting with the awkward and blushing girls, and keeping an eye at the same time to the main chance of the mess-table.

"Our boys have already found out your village, Sir Wycherly, in spite of the fog," the Vice-admiral remarked, good-humoredly, as he cast his eyes around at the movement of the street; "and the locusts of Egypt will not come nearer to breeding a famine. One would think there was a great dinner *in petto*, in every cabin of the fleet, by the number of the captain's stewards that are ashore, hey, Atwood? I have seen nine of the harpies myself, and the other seven can't be far off."

"Here is Galleygo, Sir Gervaise," returned the secretary, smiling; "though he can scarcely be called a captain's steward, having the honor to serve a Vice-admiral and a commander-in-chief."

"Aye, but we feed the whole fleet at times, and have some excuse for being a little exacting; harkee, Galleygo—get a horse-cart, and push off at once, four or five miles farther into the country; you might as well expect to find real pearls in fishes' eyes, as hope to pick up anything nice among so many gun-room and cock-pit boys. I dine ashore to-day, but Captain Greenly is fond of mutton chops, you'll remember."

This was said kindly, and in the manner of a man accustomed to treat his domestics with the familiarity of humble friends. Galleygo was as unpromising a looking butler as any gentleman ashore would be at all likely to tolerate; but he had been with his present master, and in his present capacity, ever since the latter had commanded a sloop of war. All his youth had been passed as a topman, and he was really a prime seaman; but accident having temporarily placed him in his present station, Captain Oakes was so much pleased with his attention to his duty, and particularly with his order, that he ever afterward retained him in his cabin, notwithstanding the strong desire the honest fellow himself had felt to remain aloft. Time and familiarity

at length reconciled the steward to his station, though he did not formally accept it, until a clear agreement had been made that he was not to be considered an idler on any occasion that called for the services of the best men. In this manner David, for such was his Christian name, had become a sort of nondescript on board of a man-of-war; being foremost in all the cuttings out, a captain of a gun, and was frequently seen on a yard in moments of difficulty, just to keep his hand in, as he expressed it, while he descended to the duties of the cabin in peaceable times and good weather. Nearly thirty years had he thus been half-steward, half-seaman when afloat, while on land he was rather a counselor and minister of the closet than a servant; for out of a ship he was utterly useless, though he never left his master for a week at a time, ashore or afloat. The name of Galleygo was a *sobriquet* conferred by his brother topmen, but had been so generally used that for the last twenty years most of his shipmates believed it to be his patronymic. When this compound of cabin and forecastle received the order just related he touched the lock of hair on his forehead, a ceremony he always used before he spoke to Sir Gervaise, the hat being removed at some three or four yards' distance, and made his customary answer of—

"Aye, aye, sir; your honor has been a young gentleman yourself, and knows what a young gentleman's stomach gets to be a'ter a six months' fast in the Bay of Biscay; and a young gentleman's *boy's* stomach, too. I always thinks there's but a small chance for us, sir, when I sees six or eight of them light cruisers in my neighborhood. They're som'mat like the sloops and cutters of a fleet which picks up all the prizes."

"Quite true, Master Galleygo; but if the light cruisers get the prizes, you should recollect that the Admiral always has his share of the prize-money."

"Yes, sir, I knows we has our share, but that's according to law, and because the commanders of the light craft can't help it. Let 'em once get the law on their side, and not a ha'pence would bless our pockets! No, sir, what we gets we gets by the law; and as there is no law to fetch up young gentlemen or their boys, that pays as they goes, we never gets anything they or their boys puts hands on."

"I dare say you are right, David, as you always are. It wouldn't be a bad thing to have an act of Parliament to give an Admiral his twentieth in the reefers' foragings. The old fellows would sometimes get back some of their own poultry and fruit in that way, hey, Atwood?"

The secretary smiled his assent, and then Sir Gervaise apologized to his host, repeated the order to the steward, and the party proceeded.

"This fellow of mine, Sir Wycherly, is no respecter of persons beyond the etiquette of a man-of-war," the Admiral continued, by way of farther excuse. "I believe his Majesty himself would be favored with an essay on some part of the economy of the cabin, were Galleygo to get an opportunity of speaking his mind to him. Nor is the fool without his expectations of some day enjoying this privilege; for the last time I went to court, I found honest David rigged from stem to stern, in a full suit of claret and steel, under the idea that he was 'to sail in company with me,' as he called it, 'with or without signal!'"

"There was nothing surprising in that, Sir Gervaise," observed the secretary. "Galleygo has sailed in company with you so long, and to so many strange lands; has been through so many dangers at your side, and has got so completely to consider himself as part of the family, that it was the most natural thing in the world he should expect to go to court with you."

"True enough. The fellow would face the devil, at my side, and I don't see why he should hesitate to face the King. I sometimes call him Lady Oakes, Sir Wycherly, for he appears to think he has a right of dower, or to some other lawyer-like claim on my estate; and as for the fleet, he always speaks of *that*, as if we commanded it in common. I wonder how Bluewater tolerates such a blackguard; for he never scruples to allude to him as under *our* orders! If

anything should befall me, Dick and David would have a civil war for the succession, hey, Atwood?"

"I think military subordination would bring Galleygo to his senses, Sir Gervaise, should such an unfortunate accident occur —which Heaven avert for many years to come! There is Admiral Bluewater coming up the street, at this very moment, sir."

At this sudden announcement, the whole party turned to look in the direction intimated by the secretary. It was by this time at one end of the short street, and all saw a man just entering the other, who, in his walk, air, attire, and manner, formed a striking contrast to the active, merry, bustling, youthful young sailors who thronged the hamlet. In person, Admiral Bluewater was exceedingly tall and exceedingly thin. Like most seamen who have that physical formation, he stooped: a circumstance that gave his years greater apparent command over his frame than they possessed in reality. While this bend in his figure deprived it, in a great measure, of the sturdy martial air that his superior presented to the observer, it lent to his carriage a quiet and dignity that it might otherwise have wanted. Certainly, were this officer attired like an ordinary civilian, no one would have taken him for one of England's bravest and most efficient sea-captains; he would have passed rather as some thoughtful, well-educated, and refined gentleman, of retired habits, diffident of himself, and a stranger to ambition. He wore an undress, Rear-admiral's uniform, as a matter of course; but he wore it carelessly, as if from a sense of duty only; or conscious that no arrangement could give him a military air. Still, all about his person was faultlessly neat, and perfectly respectable. In a word, no one but a man accustomed to the sea, were it not for his uniform, would suspect the Rear-admiral of being a sailor; and even the seaman himself might be often puzzled to detect any other signs of the profession about him, than were to be found in a face, which, fair, gentlemanly, handsome, and even courtly as it was, in expression and outline, wore the tint that exposure invariably stamps on the mariner's countenance. Here, however, his unseamanlike character ceased. Admiral Oakes had often declared that "Dick Bluewater knew more about a ship than any man in England;" and as for a fleet, his mode of maneuvering one had got to be the standard in the service.

As soon as Sir Gervaise recognized his friend, he expressed a wish to wait for him, which was courteously converted by Sir Wycherly into a proposition to return and meet him. So abstracted was Admiral Bluewater, however, that he did not see the party that was approaching him, until he was fairly accosted by Sir Gervaise, who led the advance by a few yards.

"Good day to you, Bluewater," commenced the latter, in his familiar, off-hand way; "I'm glad you have torn yourself away from your ship; though I must say the manner in which you came-to in that fog was more like instinct than anything human! I determined to tell you as much, the moment we met; for I don't think there is a ship half her length out of mathematical order, notwithstanding the tide runs, here, like a race-horse."

"That is owing to your captains, Sir Gervaise," returned the other, observing the respect of manner, that the inferior never loses with his superior, on service, and in a navy, let their relative rank and intimacy be what they may on all other occasions; "good captains make handy ships. Our gentlemen have now been together so long that they understand each other's movements; and every vessel in the fleet has her character as well as her commander!"

"Very true, Admiral Bluewater, and yet there is not another officer in his Majesty's service that could have brought a fleet to anchor, in so much order, and in such a fog; and I ask your leave, sir, most particularly to thank you for the lesson you have given, not only to the captains, but to the commander-in-chief. I presume I may admire that which I cannot exactly imitate."

The Rear-admiral merely smiled and touched his hat in acknowledgment of the

compliment, but he made no direct answer in words. By this time Sir Wycherly and the others had approached, and the customary introductions took place. Sir Wycherly now pressed his new acquaintance to join his guests, with so much heartiness, that there was no such thing as refusing.

"Since you and Sir Gervaise both insist on it so earnestly, Sir Wycherly," returned the Rear-admiral, "I must consent; but as it is contrary to our practice, when on foreign service—and I call this roadstead a foreign station, as to any thing we know about it—as it is contrary to our practice for both flag-officers to sleep out of the fleet, I shall claim the privilege to be allowed to go off to my ship before midnight. I think the weather looks settled, Sir Gervaise, and we may trust that many hours, without apprehension."

"Pooh—pooh—Bluewater, you are always fancying the ships in a gale, and clawing off a lee-shore. Put your heart at rest, and let us go and take a comfortable dinner with Sir Wycherly, who has a London paper, I dare to say, that may let us into some of the secrets of state. Are there any tidings from our people in Flanders?"

"Things remain pretty much as they have been," returned Sir Wycherly, "since that last terrible affair, in which the Duke got the better of the French at —I never can remember an outlandish name; but it sounds something like a Christian baptism. If my poor brother, St. James, were living, now, he could tell us all about it."

"Christian baptism! That's an odd allusion for a field of battle. The armies can't have got to Jerusalem; hey, Atwood?"

"I rather think, Sir Gervaise," the secretary coolly remarked, "that Sir Wycherly Wychecombe refers to the battle that took place last spring; it was fought at Font-something; and a font certainly has something to do with Christian baptism."

"That's it—that's it," cried Sir Wycherly, with some eagernes; "Fontenoy was the name of the place, where the Duke would have carried all before him, and brought Marshal Saxe and all his frog-eaters prisoners to England, had our Dutch and German allies behaved better than they did. So it is with poor old England, gentlemen; whatever she gains, her allies always lose for her; the Germans, or the colonists, are constantly getting us into trouble!"

Both Sir Gervaise and his friend were practical men, and well knew that they never fought the Dutch or the French without meeting with something that was pretty nearly their match. They had no faith in general national superiority. The courts-martial that so often succeeded general actions had taught them that there were all degrees of spirit, as well as all degrees of a want of spirit; and they knew too much to be the dupes of flourishes of the pen, or of vapid declamation at dinner-speeches, and in the House of Commons. Men, well led and commanded, they had ascertained by experience, were worth twice as much as the same men when ill led and ill commanded; and they were not to be told that the moral tone of an army or a fleet, from which all its success was derived, depended more on the conventional feeling that had been got up through moral agencies, than on birthplace, origin, or color. Each glanced his eyes significantly at the other, and a sarcastic smile passed over the face of Sir Gervaise, though his friend maintained the customary appearance of gravity.

"I believe Le Grand Monarque and Marshal Saxe give a different account of that matter, Sir Wycherly," dryly observed the former; "and it may be well to remember that there are two sides to every story. Whatever may be said of Dettingen, I fancy history will set down Fontenoy as anything but a feather in his Royal Highness' cap."

"You surely do not consider it possible for the French arms to overthrow a British army, Sir Gervaise Oakes!" exclaimed the simple-minded provincial—for such was Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, though he had sat in Parliament, had four thousand a year, and was one of the oldest

families in England; "it sounds like treason to admit the possibility of such a thing."

"God bless us, my dear sir, I am as far from supposing any such thing as the Duke of Cumberland himself; who, by the way, has as much English blood in his veins as the Baltic may have of the water of the Mediterranean—eh, Atwood? By the way, Sir Wycherly, I must ask a little tenderness of you in behalf of my friend the secretary, here, who has a national weakness in favor of the Pretender, and all of the clan Stuart."

"I hope not, I sincerely hope not, Sir Gervaise!" exclaimed Sir Wycherly, with a warmth that was not entirely free from alarm; his own loyalty to the new house being altogether without reproach. "Mr. Atwood has the air of a gentleman of too good principles not to see on which side real religious and political liberty lie. I am sure you are pleased to be jocular, Sir Gervaise; the very circumstance that he is in your company is a pledge of his loyalty."

"Well, well, Sir Wycherly, I would not give you a false idea of my friend Atwood, if possible; and so I may as well confess that, while his Scotch blood inclines him to toryism, his English reason makes him a whig. If Charles Stuart never gets the throne until Stephen Atwood helps him to a seat on it, he may take leave of ambition forever."

"I thought as much, Sir Gervaise—I thought *your* secretary could never lead to the doctrine of 'passive obedience and non-resistance.' That's a principle which would hardly suit sailors, Admiral Bluewater."

Admiral Bluewater's fine, full, blue eye lighted with an expression approaching irony; but he made no other answer than a slight inclination of the head. In point of fact, *he* was a Jacobite; though no one was acquainted with the circumstance but his immediate commanding officer.

As a seaman he was called on only to serve his country; and as often happens to military men, he was willing to do this under any superior whom circumstance might place over his head, let his private sentiments be what they might. During the civil war of 1715, he was too young in years, and too low in rank, to render his opinions of much importance; and, kept on foreign stations, his services could only affect the general interests of the nation, without producing any influence on the contest at home. Since that period, nothing had occurred to require one, whose duty kept him on the ocean, to come to a very positive decision between the two masters that claimed his allegiance. Sir Gervaise had always been able to persuade him that he was sustaining the honor and interests of his country, and that ought to be sufficient to a patriot, let who would rule. Notwithstanding this wide difference in political feeling between the two Admirals—Sir Gervaise being as decided a whig as his friend was a tory—their personal harmony had been without a shade. As to confidence, the superior knew the inferior so well, that he believed the surest way to prevent his taking sides openly with the Jacobites, or of doing them secret service, was to put it in his power to commit a great breach of trust.

So long as faith was put in his integrity, Sir Gervaise felt certain his friend Bluewater might be relied on; and he also knew that, should the moment ever come when the other really intended to abandon the service of the house of Hanover, he would frankly throw up his employments, and join the hostile standard, without profiting, in any manner, by the trusts he had previously enjoyed. It is also necessary that the reader should understand that Admiral Bluewater had never communicated his political opinions to any person but his friend; the Pretender and his counselors being as ignorant of them as George II. and his ministers. The only practical effect, therefore, that they had ever produced was to induce him to decline separate commands, several of which had been offered to him; one, quite equal to that enjoyed by Sir Gervaise Oakes himself.

"No," the latter answered to Sir Wycherly's remark; though the grave thoughtful expression of his face showed how little his feelings chimed in at the

moment with the ironical language of his tongue. "No, Sir Wycherly, a man-of-war's man, in particular, has not the slightest idea of 'passive obedience and non-resistance;' that is a doctrine which is intelligible only to papists and tories. Bluewater is in a brown study; thinking no doubt of the manner in which he intends to lead down on Monsieur de Gravelin, should we ever have the luck to meet that gentleman again; so we will, if its agreeable to all parties, change the subject."

"With all my heart, Sir Gervaise," answered the Baronet, cordially; "and, after all, there is little use in discussing the affairs of the Pretender any longer, for he appears to be quite out of men's minds, since that last failure of King Louis XV."

"Yes, Norris rather crushed the young viper, in its shell, and we may consider the thing at an end."

"So my late brother, Baron Wychecombe, always treated it, Sir Gervaise. He once assured me that the twelve judges were clearly against the claim, and that the Stuarts had nothing to expect from *them*."

"Did he tell you, sir, on what ground these learned gentlemen had come to this decision?" quietly asked Admiral Bluewater.

"He did, indeed; for he knew my strong desire to make out a good case against the tories so well that he had laid all the law before me. I am a bad hand, however, to repeat even what I hear; though my poor brother, the late Rev. James Wychecombe—St. James as I used to call him—could go over a discourse half an hour long, and not miss a word. Thomas and James appear to have run away with the memories of the rest of the family. Nevertheless, I recollect it all depended on an act of Parliament, which is supreme; and the house of Hanover reigning by an act of Parliament, no court could set aside the claim."

"Very clearly explained, sir," continued Bluewater; "and you will permit me to say that there was no necessity for an apology on account of the memory. Your brother, however, might not have exactly explained what an act of Parliament is. Kings, Lords, and Commons are all necessary to an act of Parliament."

"Certainly; we all know that, my dear Admiral; we poor fellows ashore here, as well as you mariners at sea. The Hanoverian succession had all three to authorize it."

"Had it a king?"

"A king! Out of dispute—or what we bachelors ought to consider as much better, it had a *queen*. Queen Anne approved of the act, and that made it an act of Parliament. I assure you, I learned a good deal of law in the Baron's visits to Wychecombe; and in the pleasant hours we used to chat together in his chambers!"

"And who signed the act of Parliament that made Anne a queen? or did she ascend the throne by regular succession? Both Mary and Anne were sovereigns by act of Parliament, and we must look back until we get the approval of a prince who took the crown by legal descent."

"Come, come, Bluewater," put in Sir Gervaise, gravely; "we may persuade Sir Wycherly, in this manner, that he has a couple of furious Jacobites in company. The Stuarts were dethroned by a revolution, which is a law of nature, and enacted by God, and which of course overshadows all other laws when it gets into the ascendant, as it clearly has done in this case. I take it, Sir Wycherly, these are your park-gates, and that yonder is the hall."

This remark changed the discourse, and the whole party proceeded toward the house, discussing the beauty of its position, its history, and its advantages, until they reached its door.

CHAPTER V.

"Monarch and ministers are awful names;
Whoever wear them, challenge our devoir."
—YOUNG.

OUR plan does not require an elaborate description of the residence of Sir Wycherly. The house had been neither priory,

abbey, nor castle; but it was erected as a dwelling for himself and his posterity, by a Sir Michael Wychecombe, two or three centuries before, and had been kept in good serviceable condition ever since. It had the usual long, narrow windows, a suitable hall, wainscoted rooms, battlemented walls, and turreted angles. It was neither large, nor small; handsome, nor ugly; grand, nor mean; but it was quaint, respectable in appearance, and comfortable as an abode.

The Admirals were put each in possession of bedchambers and dressing-rooms, as soon as they arrived; and Atwood was *berthed* not far from his commanding-officer, in readiness for service, if required. Sir Wycherly was naturally hospitable; but his retired situation had given him a zest for company, that greatly increased the inborn disposition. Sir Gervaise, it was understood, was to pass the night with him, and he entertained strong hopes of including his friend in the same arrangement. Beds were ordered, too, for Dutton, his wife, and daughter; and his namesake, the lieutenant, was expected also to sleep under his roof that night.

The day passed in the customary manner; the party having breakfasted, and then separated to attend to their several occupations, agreeably to the usages of all country houses, in all parts of the world, and, we believe, in all time. Sir Gervaise, who had sent a messenger off to the *Plantagenet* for certain papers, spent the morning in writing; Admiral Bluewater walked in the park, by himself; Atwood was occupied with his superior; Sir Wycherly rode among his laborers; and Tom Wychecombe took a rod, and pretended to go forth to fish, though he actually held his way back to the headland, lingering in and around the cottage until it was time to return home. At the proper hour, Sir Wycherly sent his chariot for the ladies; and a few minutes before the appointed moment, the party began to assemble in the drawing-room.

When Sir Wycherly appeared, he found the Duttons already in possession, with Tom doing the honors of the house. Of the sailing-master and his daughter, it is unnecessary to say more than that the former was in his best uniform—an exceedingly plain one, as was then the case with the whole naval wardrobe—and that the last had recovered from her illness, as was evident by the bloom that the sensitive blushes constantly cast athwart her lovely face. Her attire was exactly what it ought to have been: neat, simple, and becoming. In honor of the host, she wore her best; but this was what became her station, though a little jewelry that rather surpassed what might have been expected in a girl of her rank of life, threw around her person an air of modest elegance. Mrs. Dutton was a plain matronly woman—the daughter of a land-steward of a nobleman in the same county—with an air of great mental suffering, from griefs she had never yet exposed to the heartless sympathy of the world.

The Baronet was so much in the habit of seeing his humble neighbors, that an intimacy had grown up between them. Sir Wycherly, who was anything but an acute observer, felt an interest in the melancholy-looking and almost heart-broken mother, without knowing why; or certainly without suspecting the real character of her habitual sadness; while Mildred's youth and beauty had not failed of producing the customary effect of making a friend of the old bachelor. He shook hands all around, therefore, with great cordiality; expressing his joy at meeting Mrs. Dutton, and congratulating the daughter on her complete recovery.

"I see Tom has been attentive to his duty," he added, "while I've been detained by a silly fellow about a complaint against a poacher. My namesake, young Wycherly, has not got back yet, though it is quite two hours past his time; and Mr. Atwood tells me the Admiral is a little uneasy about his dispatches. I tell him Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe, though I have not the honor of ranking him among my relatives, and he is only a Virginian by birth, is a young man to be relied on; and that the dispatches are safe, let what may detain the courier."

"And why should not a Virginian be every way as trustworthy and prompt as

an Englishman, Sir Wycherly?" asked Mrs. Dutton. "He *is* an Englishman, merely separated from us by the water."

This was said mildly, or in the manner of one accustomed to speak under a rebuked feeling; but it was said earnestly, and perhaps a little reproachfully, while the speaker's eye glanced with natural interest toward the beautiful face of her daughter.

"Why not, sure enough, my dear Mrs. Dutton!" echoed the Baronet. "They *are* Englishmen, like ourselves, only born out of the realm, as it might be, and no doubt a little different on that account. They are fellow-subjects, Mrs. Dutton, and that is a great deal. Then they are miracles of loyalty, there being scarcely a Jacobite, as they tell me, in all the colonies."

"Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe is a very respectable young gentleman," said Dutton; "and I hear he is a prime seaman for his years. He has not the honor of being related to this distinguished family, like Mr. Thomas, here, it is true; but he is likely to make a name for himself. Should he get a ship, and do as handsome things in her, as he has done already, his Majesty would probably knight him; and then we should have *two* Sir Wycherly Wychecombes!"

"I hope not—I hope not!" exclaimed the Baronet; "I think there must be a law against that. As it is, I shall be obliged to put Bart. after my name, as my worthy grandfather used to do, in order to prevent confusion; but England can't bear two Sir Wycherlys, any more than the world can bear two suns. Is not that your opinion, Miss Mildred?"

The Baronet had laughed at his own allusion, showing that he spoke half jocularly; but, as his question was put in too direct a manner to escape general attention, the confused girl was obliged to answer.

"I dare say Mr. Wychecombe will never reach a rank high enough to cause any such difficulty," she said; and it was said in all sincerity; for, unconsciously, perhaps, she secretly hoped that no difference so wide might ever be created between the youth and herself. "If he should, I suppose his rights would be as good as another's, and he must keep his name."

"In such a case, which is improbable enough, as Miss Mildred has so well observed," put in Tom Wychecombe, "we should have to submit to the *knighthood*, for that comes from the king, who may knight a chimney-sweep, if he see fit; but a question might be raised as to the *name*. It is bad enough as it is; but if it really got to be two Sir Wycherlys, I think my dear uncle would be wrong to submit to such an invasion of what one might call his individuality, without making some inquiry as to the right of the gentleman to one or both his names. The result might show that the king had made a Sir Something Nobody."

The sneer and spite with which this was uttered were too marked to escape notice; and both Dutton and his wife felt it would be unpleasant to mingle further in the discourse. Still, the last, submissive, rebuked, and heart-broken as she was, felt a glow on her pale cheek, as she saw the color mount in the face of Mildred, and she detected the strong impulses that urged the generous girl herself to answer.

"We have now known Mr. Wychecombe several months," observed Mildred, fastening her full blue eyes calmly on Tom's sinister-looking face; "and we have never known anything to cause us to think he would bear a name—or names—that he does not at least think he has a right to."

This was said gently, but so distinctly that every word entered fairly into Tom Wychecombe's soul; who threw a quick, suspicious glance at the lovely speaker, as if to ascertain how far she intended any allusion to himself. Meeting with no other expression than that of generous interest, he recovered his self-command and made his reply with sufficient coolness.

"Upon my word, Mrs. Dutton," he cried, laughing; "we young men will all of us have to get over the cliff and hang dangling at the end of a rope, in order to awaken an interest in Miss Mildred, to defend us when our backs are turned. So

eloquent—and most especially so lovely, so charming an advocate, is almost certain of success; and my uncle and myself must admit the absent gentleman's right to our name; though, Heaven be praised, he has not yet got either the title or the estate."

"I hope I have said nothing, Sir Wycherly, to displease *you*," returned Mildred, with emphasis; though her face was a thousand times handsomer than ever, with the blushes that suffused it. "Nothing would pain me more than to suppose I had done so improper a thing. I merely meant that we cannot believe Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe would willingly take a name he had no right to."

"My little dear," said the Baronet, taking the hand of the distressed girl, and kissing her cheek as he had often done before, with fatherly tenderness; "it is not an easy matter for *you* to offend *me;* and I'm sure the young fellow is quite welcome to both my names, if you wish him to have 'em."

"And I merely meant, Miss Mildred," resumed Tom, who feared he might have gone too far, "that the young gentleman—quite without any fault of his own—is probably ignorant how he came by two names that have so long pertained to the head of an ancient and honorable family. There is many a young man born, who is worthy of being an earl, but whom the law considers"—here Tom paused to choose terms suitable for his auditor, when the Baronet added,

"A *filius nullius*—that's the phrase, Tom—I had it from your own father's mouth."

Tom Wychecombe started, and looked furtively around him, as if to ascertain who suspected the truth. Then he continued, anxious to regain the ground he feared he had lost in Mildred's favor:

"*Filius nullius* means, Miss Mildred, exactly what I wish to express; a family without any legal origin. They tell me, however, that in the colonies nothing is more common than for people to take the names of the great families at home, and after awhile they fancy themselves related."

"I never heard Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe say a word to lead us to suppose that he was, in any manner, connected with this family, sir," returned Mildred, calmly, but quite distinctly.

"Did you ever hear him say he was *not*, Miss Mildred?"

"I cannot say I ever did, Mr. Wychecombe. It is a subject that has seldom been introduced in my hearing."

"But it has often been introduced in his! I declare, Sir Wycherly, it has struck me as singular, that while you and I have so very frequently stated, in the presence of this gentleman, that our families are in no way connected, he has never, in any manner, not even by a nod or a look of approbation, assented to what he must certainly know to be the case. But I suppose, like a true colonist, he was unwilling to give up his hold on the old stock."

Here the entrance of Sir Gervaise Oakes changed the discourse. The Vice-admiral joined the party in good spirits, as is apt to be the case with men who have been much occupied with affairs of moment, and who meet relaxation, with a consciousness of having done their duty.

"If one could take with him to sea the comforts of such a house as this, Sir Wycherly, and such handsome faces as your own, young lady," cried Sir Gervaise, cheerfully, after he had made his salutations, "there would be an end of our exclusiveness, for every *petit maitre* of Paris and London would turn sailor, as a matter of course. Six months in the Bay of Biscay gives an old fellow like myself a keen relish for these enjoyments, as hunger makes any meat palatable; though I am far, very far indeed, from putting this house or this company on a level with an indifferent feast, even for an epicure."

"Such as it is, Sir Gervaise, the first is quite at your service, in all things," rejoined the host; "and the last will do all in its power to make itself agreeable."

"Ah—here comes Bluewater to echo all I have said and feel. I am telling Sir Wycherly and the ladies of the satisfaction we grampuses experience when we

get berthed under such a roof as this, with woman's sweet face to throw a gleam of happiness around her."

Admiral Bluewater had already saluted the mother, but when his eye fell on the face and person of Mildred, it was riveted, for an instant, with an earnestness and intentness of surprise and admiration that all noted, though no one saw fit to comment on it.

"Sir Gervaise is so established an admirer of the sex," said the Rear-admiral, recovering himself, after a pause, "that I am never astonished at any of his raptures. Salt water has the usual effect on him, however; for I have now known him longer than he might wish to be reminded of, and yet the only mistress who can keep him true is his ship."

"And to that I believe I may be said to be constant. I don't know how it is with you, Sir Wycherly, but everything I am accustomed to I like. Now, here I have sailed with both these gentlemen until I should as soon think of going to sea without a binnacle as to go to sea without 'em both—hey, Atwood? Then, as to the ship, my flag has been flying in the *Plantagenet* these ten years, and I can't bear to give the old craft up, though Bluewater, here, would have turned her over to an inferior after three years' service. I tell all the young men they don't stay long enough in any one vessel to find out her good qualities. I never was in a slow ship yet."

"For the simple reason that you never get into a fast one that you do not wear her fairly out, before you give her up. The *Plantagenet*, Sir Wycherly, is the fastest two-decker in his Majesty's service, and the Vice-admiral knows it too well to let any of us get foot in her, while her timbers will hang together."

"Let it be so, if you will; it only shows, Sir Wycherly, that I do not choose my friends for their bad qualities. But allow me to ask, young lady, if you happen to know a certain Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe—a namesake, but no relative, I understand, of our respectable host—and one who holds a commission in his Majesty's service?"

"Certainly, Sir Gervaise," answered Mildred, dropping her eyes to the floor, and trembling, though she scarce knew why; "Mr. Wychecombe has been about here, now, for some months, and we all know something about him."

"Then perhaps you can tell me whether he is generally a loiterer on duty. I do not inquire whether he is a laggard in his duty to you, but whether, mounted on a good hunter, he could get over twenty miles in eight or ten hours, for instance?"

"I think Sir Wycherly would tell you that he could, sir."

"He may be a Wychecombe, Sir Wycherly, but he is no *Plantagenet*, in the way of sailing. Surely the young man ought te have returned some hours since!"

"It is quite surprising to me that he is not back before this," returned the kind-hearted baronet. "He is active, and understands himself, and there is not a better horseman in the county—is there, Miss Mildred?"

Mildred did not think it necessary to reply to this direct appeal; but in spite of the manner in which she had been endeavoring to school her feelings, since the accident on the cliff, she could not prevent the deadly paleness that dread of some accident had produced, or the rush of color to her cheeks that followed from the unexpected question of Sir Wycherly. Turning to conceal her confusion, she met the eye of Tom Wychecombe riveted on her face, with an expression so sinister, that it caused her to tremble. Fortunately, at this moment, Sir Gervaise turned away, and drawing near his friend, on the other side of the large apartment, he said, in an undertone:

"Luckily, Atwood has brought ashore a duplicate of my dispatches, Bluewater, and if this dilatory gentleman does not return by the time we have dined, I will send off a second courier. The intelligence is too important to be trifled with; and after having brought the fleet north, to be in readiness to serve the state in this emergency, it would be rare folly to leave the ministers in ignorance of the reasons why I have done it."

"Nevertheless they would be almost as

well informed as I am myself," returned the Rear-admiral, with a little point, but quite without any bitterness of manner. "The only advantage I have over them is that I *do* know where the fleet is, which is more than the First Lord can boast of."

"True—I had forgot, my friend—but you must feel there *is* a subject on which I had better not consult you. I have received some important intelligence, that my duty, as a commander-in-chief, renders it necessary I should—keep to myself."

Sir Gervaise laughed as he concluded, though he seemed vexed and embarrassed. Admiral Bluewater betrayed neither chagrin nor disappointment; but strong, nearly ungovernable curiosity, a feeling from which he was singularly exempt in general, glowed in his eyes and lighted his whole countenance. Still, habitual submission to his superior, and the self-command of discipline, enabled him to wait for anything more that his friend might communicate. At this moment, the door opened, and Wycherly entered the room, in the state in which he had just dismounted. It was necessary to throw but a single glance at his hurried manner, and general appearance, to know that he had something of importance to communicate, and Sir Gervaise made a sign for him not to speak.

"This is public service, Sir Wycherly," said the Vice-admiral, "and I hope you will excuse us for a few minutes. I beg this good company will be seated at table, as soon as dinner is served, and that you will treat us as old friends—as I should treat you, if we were on board the *Plantagenet*. Admiral Bluewater, will you be of our conference?"

Nothing more was said until the two Admirals and the young Lieutenant were in the dressing-room of Sir Gervaise Oakes. Then the latter turned, and addressed Wycherly with the manner of a superior.

"I should have met you with reproof for this delay, young gentleman," he commenced, "did I not suspect, from your appearance, that something of moment has occurred to produce it. Had the mail passed the market-town before you reached it, sir?"

"It had not, Admiral Oakes; and I have the satisfaction of knowing that your dispatches are now several hours on their way to London. I reached the office just in season to see them mailed."

"Humph! On board the *Plantagenet*, it is the custom for an officer to report any important duty done, as soon as it is in a condition to be thus laid before the superior!"

"I presume that is the usage in all of his Majesty's ships, Sir Gervaise Oakes; but I have been taught that a proper discretion, when it does not interfere with positive orders, and sometimes when it does, is a surer sign of a useful officer than even the most slavish attention to rules."

"That is a just distinction, young gentleman, though safer in the hands of a captain, perhaps, than in those of a lieutenant," returned the Vice-admiral, glancing at his friend, though he secretly admired the youth's spirit. "Discretion is a comparative term; meaning different things with different persons. May I presume to ask what Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe calls discretion in the present instance?"

"You have every right, sir, to know, and I only wanted your permission to tell my whole story. While waiting to see the London mail start with your dispatches, and to rest my horse, a post-chaise arrived that was carrying a gentleman who is suspected of being a Jacobite, to his country-seat, some thirty miles farther west. This gentleman held a secret conference with another person of the same way of thinking as himself; and there was so much running and sending of messages that I could not avoid suspecting something was in the wind. Going to the stable to look after Sir Wycherly's hunter, for I know how much he values the animal, I found one of the stranger's servants in discourse with the hostler. The latter told me, when the chaise was gone, that great tidings had reached Exeter, before the travelers quitted the town. These tidings he described as news that 'Charley was no longer over the water.'

It is useless, Sir Gervaise, to question one so stupid; and, at the inn, though all observed the manner of the traveler and his visitor, no one could tell me anything positive. Under the circumstances, therefore, I threw myself into the return chaise, and went as far as Fowey, where I met the important intelligence that Prince Charles had actually landed, and is at this moment up, in Scotland!"

"The Pretender is then really once more among us!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, like one who had half suspected the truth.

"Not the Pretender, Sir Gervaise, as I understand the news; but his young son, Prince Charles Edward, one much more likely to give the kingdom trouble. The fact is certain, I believe, and as it struck me that it might be important to the commander of so fine a fleet as this which lies under Wychecombe Head, to know it, I lost no time in getting back with the intelligence."

"You have done well, young gentleman, and have proved that discretion *is* quite as useful and respectable in a lieutenant, as it can possibly prove to be in a full admiral of the white. Go, now, and make yourself fit to take a seat by the side of one of the sweetest girls in England, where I shall expect to see you in fifteen minutes. Well, Bluewater," he continued, as soon as the door closed on Wycherly, "this *is* news, of a certainty!"

"It is, indeed; and I take it to be the news, or connected with the news, that you have sent to the First Lord, in the late dispatches. It has not taken you altogether by surprise, if the truth were said?"

"It has not, I confess. You know what excellent intelligence we have had, the past season, from the Bordeaux agent; he sent me off such proofs of this intended expedition, that I thought it advisable to bring the fleet north on the strength of it, that the ships might be used as the exigency should require."

"Thank God, it is a long way to Scotland, and it is not probable we can reach the coast of that country until all is over! I wish we had inquired of this young man with what sort of, and how large a naval force the Prince was accompanied. Shall I send for him, that we may put the question?"

"It is better that you remain passive, Admiral Bluewater. I now promise you that you shall learn all I hear; and that, under the circumstances, I think ought to content you."

The two Admirals now separated, though neither returned to the company for some little time. The intelligence they had just learned was too important to be lightly received, and each of these veteran seamen paced his room, for near a quarter of an hour, reflecting on what might be the probable consequences to the country and to himself. Sir Gervaise Oakes expected some event of this nature, and was less taken by surprise than his friend; still he viewed the crisis as exceedingly serious, and as one likely to destroy the prosperity of the nation, as well as the peace of families. There was then in England, as there is to-day, and as there probably will be throughout all time, two parties; one of which clung to the past with its hereditary and exclusive privileges, while the other looked more toward change for anticipated advantages, and created honors. Religion, in that age, was made the stalking-horse of politicians; as is liberty on one side, and order on the other, in our own times; and men just as blindly, as vehemently, and as regardless of principle, submitted to party in the middle of the eighteenth century, as we know they do in the middle of the nineteenth. The mode of acting was a little changed and the watchwords and rallying points were not exactly the same, it is true; but, in all that relates to ignorant confidence, ferocious denunciation, and selfishness but half concealed under the cloak of patriotism, the England of the original whigs and tories was the England of conservatism and reform, and the America in 1776 the America of 1841.

Still thousands always act, in political struggles, with the fairest intentions, though they act in bitter opposition to each other. When prejudice becomes the stimulant of ignorance, no other result may be hoped for; and the experience of the world, in the management of human

affairs, has left the upright and intelligent but one conclusion as the reward of all the pains and penalties with which political revolutions have been effected—the conviction that no institutions can be invented which a short working does not show will be perverted from their original intention, by the ingenuity of those intrusted with power.

In a word, the physical constitution of man does not more infallibly tend to decrepitude and imbecility, imperiously requiring a new being and a new existence to fulfill the objects of his creation, than the moral constitutions which are the fruits of his wisdom contain the seeds of abuses and decay, that human selfishness will be as certain to cultivate, as human indulgence is to aid the course of nature, in hastening the approaches of death. Thus, while on the one hand there exists the constant incentive of abuses and hopes to induce us to wish for modifications of the social structure, on the other there stands the experience of ages to demonstrate their insufficiency to produce the happiness we aim at. If the world advances in civilization and humanity, it is because knowledge will produce its fruits in every soil, and under every condition of cultivation and improvement.

Both Sir Gervaise Oakes and Admiral Bluewater believed themselves to be purely governed by principles, in submitting to the bias that each felt toward the conflicting claims of the houses of Brunswick and Stuart. Perhaps no two men in England were in fact less influenced by motives that they ought to feel ashamed to own; and yet, as has been seen, while they thought so much alike on most other things, on this they were diametrically opposed to each other. During the many years of arduous and delicate duties that they had served together, jealousy, distrust, and discontent had been equally strangers to their bosoms; for each had ever felt the assurance that his own honor, happiness, and interests were as much ruling motives with his friend, as they could well be with himself. Their lives had been constant scenes of mutual but unpretending kindnesses; and this under circumstances that naturally awakened all the most generous and manly sentiments of their natures. When young men, their laughing messmates had nicknamed them Pylades and Orestes; and later in life, on account of their cruising so much in company, they were generally known in the navy as the "twin captains." On several occasions they had fought enemies' frigates, and captured them; on these occasions, as a matter of course, the senior of the two became most known to the nation; but Sir Gervaise had made the most generous efforts to give his junior a full share of the credit, while Captain Bluewater never spoke of the affairs without mentioning them as victories of the Commodore. In a word, on all occasions, and under all circumstances, it appeared to be the aim of these generous-minded and gallant seamen to serve each other, nor was this attempted with any effort, or striving for effect: all that was said, or done, coming naturally and spontaneously from the heart. But, for the first time in their lives, events had now occurred which threatened a jarring of the feelings between them, if they did not lead to acts which must inevitably place them in open and declared hostility to each other. No wonder, then, that both looked at the future with gloomy forebodings, and a distrust, which, if it did not render them unhappy, at least produced uneasiness.

CHAPTER VI.

"The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
Yes ma'am, and no ma'am, uttered softly, show,
Every five minutes, how the minutes go."
—COWPER.

IT is scarcely necessary to tell the reader that England, as regarded material civilization, was a very different country a hundred years since, from what is to-day. We are writing of an age of heavy wagons, coaches and six, post-chaises and four; and not of an era of MacAdam-roads, or of cars flying along by steam. A man may now post

down to a country-house, some sixty or eighty miles, to dinner; and this, too, by the aid of only a pair of horses; but, in 1745 such an engagement would have required at least a start on the previous day; and, in many parts of the island, it would have been safer to have taken two days' grace. Scotland was then farther from Devonshire, in effect, than Geneva is now; and news traveled slowly and with the usual exaggerations and uncertainties of delay. It was no wonder, then, that a Jacobite who was posting off to his country-house—the focus of an English landlord's influence and authority—filled with intelligence that had reached him through the activity of zealous political partisans, preceded the more regular tidings of the mail, by several hours. The little that had escaped this individual, or his servants, rather, for the gentleman was tolerably discreet himself, confiding in only one or two particular friends at each relay, had not got out to the world, either very fully, or very clearly. Wycherly had used intelligence in making his inquiries, and he had observed an officer's prudence in keeping his news for the ears of his superior alone.

When Sir Gervaise joined the party in the drawing-room, therefore, he saw that Sir Wycherly knew nothing of what had occurred at the north; and he intended the glance which he directed at the Lieutenant to convey a hearty approval of his discretion. This forbearance did more to raise the young officer in the opinion of the practiced and thoughtful Admiral, than the gallantry with which the youth had so recently purchased his commission; for while many were brave, few had the self-command and prudence, under circumstances like the present, that alone can make a man safe in the management of important public interests. The approbation that Sir Gervaise felt, and which he desired to manifest, for Wycherly's prudence, was altogether a principle, however; since there existed no sufficient reason for keeping the secret from as confirmed a whig as his host. On the contrary, the sooner those opinions, which both of them would be apt to term sound, were promulgated in the neighborhood, the better it might prove for the good cause. The Vice-admiral, therefore, determined to communicate, himself, as soon as the party was seated at table, the very secret which he so much commended the youth for keeping. Admiral Bluewater joining the company at this instant, Sir Wycherly led Mrs. Dutton to the table. No alteration had taken place among the guests, except that Sir Gervaise wore the red ribbon; a change in his dress that his friend considered to be openly hoisting the standard of the house of Hanover.

"One would not think, Sir Wycherly," commenced the Vice-admiral, glancing his eyes around him, as soon as all were seated, "that this good company has taken its place at your hospitable table in the midst of a threatened civil war, if not of an actual revolution."

Every hand was arrested, and every eye turned toward the speaker; even Admiral Bluewater earnestly regarding his friend, anxious to know what would come next.

"I believe my household is in due subjection," answered Sir Wycherly, gazing to the right and left, as if he expected to see his butler heading a revolt; "and I fancy the only change we shall see today, will be the removal of the courses, and the appearance of their successors."

"Aye, so says the hearty, comfortable Devonshire baronet, while seated at his own board, favored by abundance and warm friends. But it would seem the snake was only scotched, not killed."

"Sir Gervaise Oakes has grown figurative; with his snakes and *scotch*ings," observed the Rear-admiral, a little dryly.

"It is *Scotch*-ing, as you say with so much emphasis, Bluewater. I suppose Sir Wycherly—I suppose, Mr. Dutton, and you, my pretty young lady—I presume all of you have heard of such a person as the Pretender; some of you may possibly have seen him."

Sir Wycherly now dropped his knife and fork, and sat gazing at the speaker in amazement. To him the Christian relig-

ion, the liberties of the subject — more especially of the baronet and lord of the manor, who had four thousand a year— and the Protestant succession, all seemed to be in sudden danger.

"I always told my brother, the judge— Mr. Baron Wychecombe, who is dead and gone — that what between the French, that rogue the Pope, and the spurious offspring of King James II., we should yet see troublesome times in England! And now, sir, my predictions are verified!"

"Not as to England, yet, my good sir. Of Scotland I have not quite so good news to tell you; as your namesake, here, brings us the tidings that the son of the Pretender has landed in that kingdom, and is rallying the clans. He has come unattended by any Frenchmen it would seem, and has thrown himself altogether on the misguided nobles and followers of his house."

"'Tis at least a chivalrous and princely act!" exclaimed Admiral Bluewater.

"Yes—inasmuch as it is a heedless and mad one. England is not to be conquered by a rabble of half-dressed Scotchmen."

"True; but England may be conquered by England, notwithstanding."

Sir Gervaise now chose to remain silent, for never before had Bluewater come so near betraying his political bias in the presence of third persons. This pause enabled Sir Wycherly to find his voice.

"Let me see, Tom," said the baronet, "fifteen and ten are twenty-five, and ten are thirty-five, and ten are forty-five—it is just thirty years since the Jacobites were up before! It would seem that half a human life is not sufficient to fill the cravings of a Scotchman's maw for English gold."

"Twice thirty years would hardly quell the promptings of a noble spirit, when his notions of justice showed him the way to the English throne," observed Bluewater, coolly. "For my part, I like the spirit of this young prince, for he who nobly dares nobly deserves. What say you, my beautiful neighbor?"

"If you mean to address me, sir, by that compliment," answered Mildred, modestly, but with the emphasis that the gentlest of her sex are apt to use when they feel strongly, "I must be suffered to say that I hope every Englishman will dare as nobly, and deserve as well in defense of his liberties."

"Come, come, Bluewater," interrupted Sir Gervaise, with a gravity that almost amounted to reproof, "I cannot permit such innuendoes before one so young and unpracticed. The young lady might really suppose that his Majesty's fleet was intrusted to men unworthy his confidence by the cool way you carry on the joke. I propose, now, Sir Wycherly, that we eat our dinner in peace, and say no more about this mad expedition, until the cloth is drawn, at least. It's a long road to Scotland, and there is little danger that this adventurer will find his way to Devonshire before the nuts are placed before us."

"It would be nuts to us, if he did, Sir Gervaise," put in Tom Wychecombe, laughing heartily at his own wit. "My uncle would enjoy nothing more than to see the spurious sovereign on his own estate, here, and in the hands of his tenants. I think, sir, that Wychecombe and one or two of the adjoining manors would dispose of him."

"That might depend on circumstances," the Admiral answered, a little dryly. "These Scots have such a thing as a claymore, and are desperate fellows, they tell me, at a charge. The very fact of arming a soldier with a short sword shows a most bloody-minded disposition."

"You forget, Sir Gervaise, that we have our Cornish hug, here in the west of England; and I will put our fellows against any Scotch regiment that ever charged an enemy."

Tom laughed again at his own allusion to a proverbial mode of grappling, familiar to the adjoining county.

"This is all very well, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, so long as Devonshire is in the west of England, and Scotland lies north of the Tweed. Sir Wycherly might as well leave the matter in the hands of the Duke and his regulars, if it were only in the way of letting every man follow his own trade."

"It strikes me as so singularly insolent in a base-born boy like this pretending to the English crown that I can barely speak of him with patience! We all know that his father was a changeling, and the son of a changeling can have no more right than the father himself. I do not remember what the law terms such pretenders; but I dare say it is something sufficiently odious."

"*Filius nullius*, Thomas," said Sir Wycherly, with a little eagerness, to show his learning. "That's the very phrase. I have it from the first authority—my late brother, Baron Wychecombe, giving it to me with his own mouth, on an occasion that called for an understanding of such matters. The judge was a most accurate lawyer, particularly in all that related to names; and I'll engage, if he were living at this moment, he would tell you the legal appellation of a changeling ought to be *filius nullius*."

In spite of his native impudence, and an innate determination to make his way in the world, without much regard to truth, Tom Wychecombe felt his cheek burn so much, at this innocent allusion of his reputed uncle, that he was actually obliged to turn away his face, in order to conceal his confusion. Had any moral delinquency of his own been implicated in the remark, he might have found means to steel himself against its consequences—but, as is only too often the case, he was far more ashamed of a misfortune over which he had no possible control, than he would have been of a crime for which he was strictly responsible in morals. Sir Gervaise smiled at Sir Wycherly's knowledge of law terms, not to say of Latin; and turning good-humoredly to his friend the Rear-admiral, anxious to re-establish friendly relations with him, he said, with well-concealed irony:

"Sir Wycherly must be right, Bluewater. A changeling is nobody—that is to say, he is not the body he pretends to be, which is substantially being nobody—and the son of nobody is clearly a *filius nullius*. And now having settled what may be called the law of the case, I demand a truce, until we get our nuts; for as to Mr. Thomas Wychecombe's having his nut to crack, at least to-day, I take it there are too many loyal subjects in the north."

When men know each other as well as was the case with our two admirals, there are a thousand secret means of annoyance, as well as of establishing amity. Admiral Bluewater was well aware that Sir Gervaise was greatly superior to the vulgar whig notion of the day, which believed in the fabricated tale of the Pretender's spurious birth—and the secret and ironical allusion he had made to his impression on that subject, acted as oil to his own chafed spirit, disposing him to moderation. This had been the intention of the other; and the smiles they exchanged sufficiently proved that their usual mental intercourse was temporarily restored at last.

Deference to his guests made Sir Wycherly consent to change the subject, although he was a little mystified with the obvious reluctance of the two admirals to speak of an enterprise that ought to be uppermost, according to his notion of the matter, in every Englishman's mind. Tom had received a rebuke that kept him silent during the rest of the dinner—while the others were content to eat and drink, as if nothing had happened.

It is seldom that a party takes its seat at table without some secret maneuvering, as to the neighborhood, when the claims of rank and character do not interfere with personal wishes. Sir Wycherly had placed Sir Gervaise on his right, and Mrs. Dutton on his left.

But Admiral Bluewater had escaped from his control, and taken his seat next to Mildred, who had been placed by Tom Wychecombe close to himself, at the foot of the table. Wycherly occupied the seat opposite, and this compelled Dutton, and Mr. Rotherham, the vicar, to fill the other two chairs. The good Baronet had made a wry face, at seeing a Rear-admiral so unworthily bestowed; but Sir Gervaise assuring him that his friend was never so happy as when in the service of beauty, he was fain to submit to the arrangement.

That Admiral Bluewater was struck with Mildred's beauty, and pleased with

her natural and feminine manner, one altogether superior to what might have been expected from her station in life, was very apparent to all at table; though it was quite impossible to mistake his parental and frank air for any other admiration than that which was suitable to the difference in years, and in unison with their respective conditions and experience. Mrs. Dutton, so far from taking the alarm at the Rear-admiral's attentions, felt gratification in observing them; and perhaps she experienced a secret pride in the consciousness of their being so well merited. It has been said, already, that she was, herself, the daughter of a land-steward of a nobleman, in an adjoining county; but it may be well to add, here, that she had been so great a favorite with the daughters of her father's employer, as to have been admitted, in a measure, to their society; and to have enjoyed some of the advantages of their education. Lady Wilmeter, the mother of the young ladies, to whom she was admitted as a sort of humble companion, had formed the opinion it might be an advantage to the girl to educate her for a governess; little conceiving, in her own situation, that she was preparing a course of life for Martha Ray, for such was Mrs. Dutton's maiden name, that was perhaps the least enviable of all the careers that a virtuous and intelligent female can run. This was as education and governesses were appreciated a century ago; the world, with all its faults and sophisms, having unquestionably made a vast stride toward real civilization, and moral truths, in a thousand important interests, since that time. Nevertheless, the education was received, together with a good many tastes, and sentiments, and opinions, which it may well be questioned, whether they contributed most to the happiness or unhappiness of the pupil, in her future life.

Frank Dutton, then a handsome, though far from polished young sea-lieutenant, interfered with the arrangement, by making Martha Ray his wife, when she was two-and-twenty. This match was suitable, in all respects, with the important exception of the educations and characters of the parties. Still, as a woman may well be more refined, and in some things, even more intelligent than her husband; and as sailors, in the commencement of the eighteenth century, formed a class of society much more distinct than they do to-day, there would have been nothing absolutely incompatible with the future well-being of the young couple, had each pursued his or her own career, in a manner suitable to their respective duties. Young Dutton took away his bride, with the two thousand pounds she had received from her father, and for a long time he was seen no more in his native county. After an absence of some twenty years, however, he returned, broken in constitution, and degraded in rank. Mrs. Dutton brought with her one child, the beautiful girl introduced to the reader, and to whom she was studiously imparting all she had herself acquired in the adventitious manner mentioned. Such were the means by which Mildred, like her mother, had been educated above her condition in life; and it had been remarked that, though Mrs. Dutton had probably no cause to felicitate herself on the possession of manners and sentiments that met with so little sympathy or appreciation, in her actual situation, she assiduously cultivated the same manners and opinions in her daughter; frequently manifesting a sort of sickly fastidiousness on the subject of Mildred's deportment and tastes. It is probable the girl owed her improvement in both, however, more to the circumstance of her being left so much alone with her mother, than to any positive lessons she received; the influence of example, for years, producing its usual effects.

No one in Wychecombe positively knew the history of Dutton's professional degradation. He had never risen higher than to be a lieutenant; and from this station he had fallen by the sentence of a court-martial. His restoration to the service, in the humbler and almost hopeless rank of a master, was believed to have been brought about by Mrs. Dutton's influence with the present Lord Wilmeter, who was the brother of her youthful companions. That the husband had

wasted his means was as certain as that his habits, on the score of temperance at least, were bad, and that his wife, if not positively broken-hearted, was an unhappy woman; one to be pitied, and admired. Sir Wycherly was little addicted to analysis, but he could not fail to discover the superiority of the wife and daughter, over the husband and father; and it is due to his young namesake to add, that his obvious admiration of Mildred was quite as much owing to her mind, deportment, character, and tastes, as to her exceeding personal charms.

This little digression may, perhaps, in the reader's eyes, excuse the interest Admiral Bluewater took in our heroine. With the indulgence of years and station, and the tact of a man of the world, he succeeded in drawing Mildred out, without alarming her timidity; and he was surprised at discovering the delicacy of her sentiments, and the accuracy of her knowledge. He was too conversant with society and had too much good taste, to make any deliberate parade of opinions; but in the quiet manner that is so easy to those who are accustomed to deal with truths and tastes as familiar things, he succeeded in inducing her to answer his own remarks, to sympathize with his feelings, to laugh when he laughed, and to assume a look of disapproval, when he felt that disapprobation was just. To all this Wycherly was a delighted witness, and in some respects he participated in the conversation; for there was evidently no wish on the part of the Rear-admiral to monopolize his beautiful companion to himself. Perhaps the position of the young man, directly opposite to her, aided in inducing Mildred to bestow so many grateful looks and sweet smiles on the older officer; for she could not glance across the table, without meeting the admiring gaze of Wycherly fastened on her own blushing face.

It is certain, if our heroine did not, during this repast, make a conquest of Admiral Bluewater, in the ordinary meaning of the term, that she made him a friend. Sir Gervaise, even, was struck with the singular and devoted manner in which his old messmate gave all his attention to the beautiful girl at his side; and, once or twice, he caught himself conjuring whether it were possible that one as practiced, as sensible, and as much accustomed to the beauties of the court, as Bluewater, had actually been caught by the pretty face of a country girl, when so well turned of fifty, himself! Then discarding the notion as preposterous, he gave his attention to the discourse of Sir Wycherly; a dissertation on rabbits and rabbit-warrens. In this manner the dinner passed away.

Mrs. Dutton asked her host's permission to retire with her daughter, at the earliest moment permitted by propriety. In quitting the room she cast an anxious glance at the face of her husband, which was already becoming flushed with his frequent applications of port; and in spite of an effort to look smiling and cheerful, her lip quivered, and by the time she and Mildred reached the drawing-room, tears were fast falling down her cheeks. No explanation was asked, or needed, by the daughter, who threw herself into her mother's arms, and for several minutes they wept together, in silence. Never had Mrs. Dutton spoken, even to Mildred, of the besetting and degrading vice of her husband; but it had been impossible to conceal its painful consequences from the world; much less from one who lived in the bosom of her family. On that failing, which the wife treated so tenderly, the daughter of course could not touch; but the silent communion of tears had got to be so sweet to both, that, within the last year, it was of very frequent occurrence.

"Really, Mildred," said the mother, at length, after having succeeded in suppressing her emotion, and in drying her eyes, while she smiled fondly in the face of the lovely and affectionate girl, "this Admiral Bluewater is getting to be so particular, I hardly know how to treat the matter."

"O! mother, he is a delightful old gentleman! and he is so gentle, while he is so frank, that he wins your confidence almost before you know it. I wonder if

he could have been serious in what he said about the noble daring and noble deserving of Prince Edward?"

"That must pass for trifling, of course; the ministry would scarcely employ any but a true whig, in command of a fleet. I saw several of his family, when a girl, and have always heard them spoken of with esteem and respect. Lord Bluewater, this gentleman's cousin, was very intimate with the present Lord Wilmeter, and was often at the castle. I remember to have heard that he had a disappointment in love, when quite a young man, and that he has ever since been considered a confirmed bachelor. So you will take heed, my love."

"The warning was unnecessary, dear mother," returned Mildred, laughing; "I could dote on the Admiral as a father, but must be excused from considering him young enough for a nearer tie."

"And yet he has the much admired profession, Mildred," said the mother, smiling fondly, and yet a little archly. "I have often heard you speak of your passion for the sea."

"That was formerly, mother, when I spoke as a sailor's daughter, and as girls are apt to speak, without much reflection. I do not know that I think better, now, of a seaman's profession than I do of any other. I fear there is often much misery in store for soldiers' and sailors' wives."

Mrs. Dutton's lip quivered again; but hearing a foot at the door, she made an effort to be composed, just as Admiral Bluewater entered.

"I have run away from the bottle, Mrs. Dutton, to join you and your fair daughter, as I would run from an enemy of twice my force," he said, giving each lady a hand, in a manner so friendly, as to render the act more than gracious; for it was kind. "Oakes is bowsing out his jib with his brother baronet, as we sailors say, and I have hauled out of the line without a signal."

"I hope Sir Gervaise Oakes does not consider it necessary to drink more wine than is good for the mind and body," observed Mrs. Dutton, with a haste that she immediately regretted.

"Not he. Gervaise Oakes is as discreet a man, in all that relates to the table, as an anchorite; and yet he has a faculty of seeming to drink, that makes him a boon companion for a four bottle man. How the deuce he does it is more than I can tell you; but he does it so well, that he does not more thoroughly get the better of the king's enemies on the high seas, than he floors his friends under the table. Sir Wycherly has begun his libations in honor of the house of Hanover, and they will be likely to make a long sitting."

Mrs. Dutton sighed, and walked away to a window, to conceal the paleness of her cheeks. Admiral Bluewater, though perfectly abstemious himself, regarded license with the bottle after dinner, like most men of that age, as a very venial weakness, and he quietly took a seat by the side of Mildred, and began to converse.

"I hope, young lady, as a sailor's child, you feel an hereditary indulgence for a seaman's gossip," he said. "We, who are so much shut up in our ships, have a poverty of ideas on most subjects; and as to always talking of the winds and waves, that would fatigue even a poet."

"As a sailor's daughter, I honor my father's calling, sir; and as an English girl, I venerate the brave defenders of the island. Nor do I know that seamen have less to say than other men."

"I am glad to hear you confess this, for—shall I be frank with you, and take the liberty that would better become a friend of a dozen years than an acquaintance of a day? and yet, I know not why it is so, my dear child, but I feel as if I had long known you, though I am certain we never met before."

"Perhaps, sir, it is an omen that we are long to know each other, in future," said Mildred, with the winning confidence of unsuspecting and innocent girlhood. "I hope you will use no reserve."

"Well, then, at the risk of making a sad blunder, I will just say, that 'my nephew Tom' is anything but a prepossessing youth; and that I hope all eyes regard him exactly as he appears to a sailor of fifty-five."

"I cannot answer for more than those of a girl of nineteen, Admiral Bluewater," said Mildred, laughing; "but, for her, I think I may say that she does not look on him as either an Adonis, or a Crichton."

"Upon my soul! I am right glad to hear this, for the fellow has accidental advantages enough to render him formidable. He is the heir to the baronetcy, and this estate, I believe?"

"I presume he is. Sir Wycherly has no other nephew—or at least this is the eldest of three brothers, I am told—and, being childless himself, it *must* be so. My father tells me Sir Wycherly speaks of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe as his future heir."

"Your father! Aye, fathers look on these matters with eyes very different from their daughters!"

"There is one thing about seamen that renders them at least safe acquaintances," said Mildred, smiling; "I mean their frankness."

"That is a failing of mine, as I have heard. But you will pardon an indiscretion that arises in the interest I feel in yourself. The eldest of three brothers—is the lieutenant, then, a younger son?"

"*He* does not belong to the family at all, I believe," Mildred answered, coloring slightly, in spite of a resolute determination to appear unconcerned. "Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe is no relation of our host, I hear; though he bears both of his names. He is from the colonies; born in Virginia."

"He is a noble, and a noble-looking fellow. Were I the Baronet, I would break the entail, rather than the acres should go to that sinister-looking nephew, and bestow them on the namesake. From Virginia, and not even a relative at all?"

"That is what Mr. Thomas Wychecombe says; and even Sir Wycherly confirms it. I have never heard Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe speak on the subject himself."

"A weakness of poor human nature! The lad finds an honorable, ancient, and affluent family here, and has not the courage to declare his want of affinity to it; happening to bear the same name."

Mildred hesitated about replying; but a generous feeling got the better of her diffidence. "I have never seen anything in the conduct of Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe to induce me to think that he feels any such weakness," she said, earnestly. "He seems rather to take pride in, than to feel ashamed of, his being a colonial; and you know, we, in England, hardly look on the people of the colonies as our equals."

"And have you, young lady, any of that overweening prejudice in favor of your own island?"

"I hope not; but I think most persons have. Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe admits that Virginia is inferior to England, in a thousand things; and yet he seems to take pride in his birthplace."

"Every sentiment of this nature is to be traced to self. We know that the fact is irretrievable, and struggle to be proud of what we cannot help. The Turk will tell you he has the honor to be a native of Stamboul; the Parisian will boast of his Faubourg, and the cockney exults in Wapping. Personal conceit lies at the bottom of all; for we fancy that the places to which *we* belong, are not places to be ashamed of."

"And yet I do not think Mr. Wycherly at all remarkable for conceit. On the contrary, he is rather diffident and unassuming."

This was said simply, but so sincerely, as to induce the listener to fasten his penetrating blue eye on the speaker, who now first took the alarm, and felt that she might have said too much. At this moment the two young men entered, and a servant appeared to request that Admiral Bluewater would do Sir Gervaise Oakes the favor to join him in the dressing-room of the latter.

Tom Wychecombe reported the condition of the dinner-table to be such as to render it desirable for all but three and four bottle men to retire. Hanoverian toasts and sentiments were in the ascendant, and there was every appearance that those who remained intended to make a night of it. This was sad intelligence for Mrs. Dutton, who had come forward

eagerly to hear the report, but who now returned to the window, apparently irresolute as to the course she ought to take. As both the young men remained near Mildred, she had sufficient opportunity to come to her decision without interruption or hinderance.

CHAPTER VII.

"Somewhat we will do.
And, look, when I am king, claim thou of me
The earldom of Hereford, and all the movables
Whereof the king my brother was possessed."
—RICHARD III.

REAR-ADMIRAL BLUEWATER found Sir Gervaise Oakes pacing a large dressing-room, quarter-deck fashion, with as much zeal as if just released from a long sitting, on official duty in his own cabin. As the two officers were perfectly familiar with each other's personal habits, neither deviated from his particular mode of indulging his ease; but the last comer quietly took his seat, in a large chair, disposing of his person in a way to show he intended to consult his comfort, let what would happen.

"Bluewater," commenced Sir Gervaise, "this is a very foolish affair of the Pretender's son, and can only lead to his destruction. I look upon it as altogether unfortunate."

"That, as it may terminate. No man can tell what a day, or an hour, may bring forth. I am sure such a rising was one of the last things *I* have been anticipating, down yonder, in the Bay of Biscay."

"I wish, with all my heart, we had never left it," muttered Sir Gervaise, so low that his companion did not hear him. Then he added in a louder tone, "*Our* duty, however, is very simple. We have only to obey orders; and it seems that the young man has no naval force to sustain him. We shall probably be sent to watch Brest or L'Orient, or some other port. Monsieur must be kept in, let what will happen."

"I rather think it would be better to let him out, our chances on the high seas being at least as good as his own. I am no friend of blockades, which strike me as an un-English mode of carrying on a war."

"You are right enough, Dick, in the main," returned Sir Gervaise, laughing.

"Aye, and *on* the main, Oakes. I sincerely hope the First Lord will not send a man like you, who are every way so capable of giving an account of your enemy, with plenty of sea-room, on duty so scurvy as a blockade."

"A man like *me!* Why a man like *me* in particular? I trust I am to have the pleasure of Admiral Bluewater's company, advice, and assistance?"

"An inferior never can know, Sir Gervaise, where it may suit the pleasure of his superiors to order him."

"That distinction of superior and inferior, Bluewater, will one day lead you into a confounded scrape, I fear. If you consider Charles Stuart your sovereign, it is not probable that orders issued by a servant of King George will be much respected. I hope you will do nothing hastily, or without consulting your oldest and truest friend."

"You know my sentiments, and there is little use in dwelling on them now. So long as the quarrel was between my own country and a foreign land, I have been content to serve; but when my lawful prince, or his son and heir, comes in this gallant and chivalrous manner, throwing himself, as it might be, into the very arms of his subjects, confiding all to their loyalty and spirit, it makes such an appeal to every nobler feeling, that the heart finds it difficult to repulse. I could have joined Norris, with right good will, in dispersing and destroying the armament that Louis XV. was sending against us, in this very cause; but here everything is English, and Englishmen have the quarrel entirely to themselves. I do not see how, as a loyal subject of my hereditary prince, I can well refrain from joining his standard."

"And would *you*, Dick Bluewater, who, to my certain knowledge, were sent on board ship at twelve years of age, and who, for more than forty years, have been a man-of-war's man, body and soul; would you now strip your old hulk of the

sea-blue that has so long covered and become it, rig yourself out like a soldier, with a feather in your hat—aye, d——e, and a camp-kettle on your arm, and follow a drummer, like one of your kinsmen, Lord Bluewater's fellows of the guards?—for of sailors, your lawful prince, as you call him, hasn't enough to stopper his conscience, or to whip the tail of his coat, to keep it from being torn to tatters by the heather of Scotland. If you *do* follow the adventurer, it must be in some such character, since I question if he can muster a seaman to tell him the bearings of London from Perth."

"When I join him he will be better off."

"And what could even *you* do alone among a parcel of Scotchmen, running about their hills under bare poles? Your signals will not maneuver regiments, and as for maneuvering in any other manner, you know nothing. No—no; stay where you are, and help an old friend with knowledge that is useful to him. I should be afraid to do a dashing thing, unless I felt the certainty of having you in my van, to strike the first blow; or in my rear, to bring me off handsomely."

"You would be afraid of nothing, Gervaise Oakes, whether I stood at your elbow or were off in Scotland. Fear is not your failing, though temerity may be."

"Then I want your presence to keep me within the bounds of reason," said Sir Gervaise, stopping short in his walk, and looking his friend smilingly in the face. "In some mode, or other, I always need your aid."

"I understand the meaning of your words, Sir Gervaise, and appreciate the feeling that dictates them. You must have a perfect conviction that I will do nothing hastily, and that I will betray no trust. When I turn my back on King George, it will be loyalty, in one sense, whatever he may think of it in another; and when I join Prince Charles Edward, it will be with a conscience that he need not be ashamed to probe. What names he bears! They are the designations of ancient English sovereigns, and ought of themselves to awaken the sensibilities of Englishmen."

"Aye, Charles in particular," returned the Vice-admiral, with something like a sneer. "There's the second Charles, for instance—St. Charles, as our good host, Sir Wycherly, might call him—he is a pattern prince for Englishmen to admire. Then his father was of the school of the Star-Chamber martyrs!"

"Both were lineal descendants of the Conqueror, and of the Saxon princes; and both united the double titles to the throne, in their sacred persons. I have always considered Charles II. as the victim of the rebellious conduct of his subjects, rather than vicious. He was driven abroad into a most corrupt state of society, and was perverted by our wickedness. As to the father, he was the real St. Charles, and a martyred saint he was; dying for true religion as well as for his legal rights. Then the Edwards—glorious fellows!—remember that they were all but one Plantagenets; a name, of itself, to rouse an Englishman's fire!"

"And yet the only difference between the right of these very Plantagenets to the throne, and that of the reigning prince, is, that one produced a revolution by the strong hand, and the other was produced by a revolution that came from a nation. I do not know that your Plantagenets ever did anything for a navy, the only real source of England's power and glory. D——e, Dick, if I think so much of your Plantagenets, after all!"

"And yet the name of Oakes is to be met with among their bravest knights, and most faithful followers."

"The Oakes, like the pines, have been timbers in every ship that has floated," returned the Vice-admiral, half unconscious himself of the pun he was making.

For more than a minute Sir Gervaise continued his walk, his head a little inclined forward, like a man who pondered deeply on some matter of interest. Then, suddenly stopping, he turned toward his friend, whom he regarded near another minute ere he resumed his discourse.

"I wish I could fairly get you to exercise your excellent reason on this matter,

Dick," he said, after a pause; "then I should be certain of having secured you on the side of liberty."

Admiral Bluewater merely shook his head, but he continued silent, as if he deemed discussion altogether supererogatory. During this pause, a gentle tap at the door announced a visitor; and at the request to enter, Atwood made his appearance. He held in his hand a large package, which bore on the envelope the usual stamp that indicated it was sent on public service.

"I beg pardon, Sir Gervaise," commenced the secretary, who always proceeded at once to business when business was to be done; "but his Majesty's service will not admit of delay. This packet has just come to hand, by the arrival of an express, which left the admiralty yesterday noon."

"And how the devil did he know where to find me!" exclaimed the Vice-admiral, holding out a hand to receive the communication.

"It is all owing to this young lieutenant's forethought in following up the Jacobite intelligence to a market-town. The courier was bound to Falmouth, as fast as post-horses could carry him, when he heard, luckily, that the fleet lay at anchor under Wychecombe Head; and quite as luckily, he is an officer who had the intelligence to know that you would sooner get the dispatches if he turned aside and came here by land, than if he went on to Falmouth, got aboard the sloop that was to sail with him for the Bay of Biscay, and come round here by water."

Sir Gervaise smiled at this sally, which was one in keeping with all Atwood's feelings; for the secretary had matured a system of expresses which, to his great mortification, his patron laughed at, and the admiralty entirely overlooked. No time was lost, however, in the way of business; the secretary having placed the candles on a table, where Sir Gervaise took a chair, and had already broken a seal. The process of reading, nevertheless, was suddenly interrupted by the Vice-admiral's looking up, and exclaiming:

"Why, you are not about to leave us, Bluewater?"

"You may have private business with Mr. Atwood, Sir Gervaise, and perhaps I had better retire."

Now, it so happened that while Sir Gervaise Oakes had never by look or syllable, as he confidently believed, betrayed the secret of his friend's Jacobite propensities, Atwood was perfectly aware of their existence. Nor had the latter obtained his knowledge by any unworthy means.

He had been neither an eavesdropper, nor an inquirer into private communications, as so often happens around the persons of men in high trusts; all his knowledge having been obtained through native sagacity and unavoidable opportunities. On the present occasion, the secretary, with the tact of a man of experience, felt that his presence might be dispensed with; and he cut short the discussion between the two Admirals by a very timely remark of his own.

"I have left the letters uncopied, Sir Gervaise," he said, "and will go and finish them. A message by Locker"—this was Sir Gervaise's body-servant—"will bring me back at a moment's notice, should you need me again to-night."

"That Atwood has a surprising instinct for a Scotchman!" exclaimed the Vice-admiral, as soon as the door was closed on the secretary. "He not only knows when he is wanted, but when he is not wanted. The last is an extraordinary attainment for one of his nation."

"And one that an Englishman may do well to emulate," returned Bluewater. "It is possible my company may be dispensed with, also, just at this important moment."

"You are not so much afraid of the Hanoverians, Dick, as to run away from their handwriting, are ye? Ha—what's this? As I live, a packet for yourself, and directed to 'Rear-admiral Sir Richard Bluewater, K. B.' By the Lord, my old boy, they've given you the red ribbon at last! This is an honor well earned, and which may be fitly worn."

"'Tis rather unexpected, I must own. The letter, however, cannot be addressed

to me, as I am not a Knight of the Bath."

"This is rank nonsense. Open the packet at once, or I will do it for you. Are there two Dick Bluewaters in the world, or another rear-admiral of the same name?"

"I would rather not receive a letter that does not strictly bear my address," returned the other coldly.

"As I'll be sworn, this does. But hand it to me, since you are so scrupulous, and I will do that small service for you."

As this was said, Sir Gervaise tore aside the seals, and, as he proceeded rather summarily, a red ribbon was soon uncased and fell upon the carpet. The other usual insignia of the Bath made their appearance, and a letter was found among them, to explain the meaning of all. Everything was in due form, and went to acquaint Rear-admiral Bluewater that his Majesty had been graciously pleased to confer on him one of the vacant red ribbons of the day, as a reward for his eminent services on different occasions. There was even a short communication from the premier, expressing the great satisfaction of the ministry in thus being able to second the royal good pleasure, with hearty good-will.

"Well, what do you think of that, Richard Bluewater?" asked Sir Gervaise, triumphantly. "Did I not always tell you that, sooner or later, it must come?"

"It has come too late, then," coldly returned the other, laying the ribbon, jewels, and letters quietly on the table. "This is an honor I can receive, now, only from my rightful prince. None other can legally create a Knight of the Bath."

"And pray, Mr. Richard Bluewater, who made you a captain, a commander, a rear-admiral? Do you believe me an impostor, because I wear this ribbon, on authority no better than that of the house of Hanover? Am I, or am I not, in your judgment, a vice-admiral of the red?"

"I make a great distinction, Oakes, between rank in the navy and mere personal dignity. In the one case, you serve your country, and give quite as much as you receive; whereas, in the other, it is a grace to confer consideration on the person honored, without such an equivalent as can find an apology for accepting a rank illegally conferred."

"The devil take your distinctions, which would unsettle everything, and render the service a Babel. If I am a vice-admiral of the red, I am a Knight of the Bath; and if you are a rear-admiral of the white, you are also a knight of that honorable order. All comes from the same source of authority, and from the same fountain of honor."

"I do not view it thus. Our commissions are from the admiralty, which represents the country; but dignity comes from the prince who happens to reign, let his title be what it may."

"Do you happen to think Richard III. a usurper, or a lawful prince?"

"A usurper, out of all question; and a murderer to boot. His name should be struck from the list of English kings. I never hear it without execrating him and his deeds."

"Pooh, pooh, Dick, this is talking more like a poet than a seaman. If only one-half of the sovereigns who deserve to be execrated had their names erased, the list of even our English kings would be rather short, and some countries would be without any historical kings at all. However much Richard III. may deserve cashiering in this summary manner, his peers and laws are just as good as any other prince's peers and laws. Witness the Duke of Norfolk, for instance."

"Ay, that cannot be helped by me; but it *is* in my power to prevent Richard Bluewater's being made a Knight of the Bath by George II.; and the power shall be used."

"It would seem not, as he is already created; and I dare say, gazetted."

"The oaths are not yet taken, and it is, at least, an Englishman's birthright to decline an honor; if, indeed, this can be esteemed an honor, at all."

"Upon my word, Rear-admiral Sir Richard Bluewater, you are disposed to be complimentary to-night! The unworthy knight present, and all the rest of the order, are infinitely indebted to you!"

"Your case and mine, Oakes, are essen-

tially different," returned the other, with some emotions in his voice and manner. "Your ribbon was fairly won, fighting the battles of England, and can be worn with credit to yourself and to your country; but those baubles are sent to me, at a moment when a rising was foreseen, and as a sop to keep me in good humor, as well as to propitiate the whole Bluewater interest."

"That is pure conjecture, and I dare say will prove to be altogether a mistake. Here are the dispatches to speak for themselves; and as it is scarcely possible that the ministry should have known of this rash movement of the Pretender's son, more than a few days, my life on it, the dates will show that your ribbon was bestowed before the enterprise was even suspected."

As Sir Gervaise commenced, with his constitutional ardor, to turn over the letters, as soon as his mind was directed to this particular object, Admiral Bluewater resumed his seat, awaiting the result, with not a little curiosity; though at the same time, with a smile of incredulity. The examination disappointed Sir Gervaise Oakes. The dates proved that the ministers were better informed than he had supposed; for it appeared they had been apprised about the time he was himself of the intended movement. His orders were to bring the fleet north, and in substance to do the very thing his own sagacity had dictated. So far everything was well; and he could not entertain a doubt about receiving the hearty approbation of his superiors, for the course he had taken. But here his gratification ended; for, on looking at the dates of the different communications, it was evident that the red ribbon was bestowed after the intelligence of the Pretender's movement had reached London. A private letter, from a friend at the Board of Admiralty, too, spoke of his own probable promotion to the rank of admiral of the blue; and mentioned several other similar preferments, in a way to show that the government was fortifying itself, in the present crisis, as much as possible, by favors. This was a polite mode of procedure with ordinary men, it is true; but with officers of the elevation of mind, and of the independence of character of our two admirals, it was most likely to produce disgust.

"D——n 'em, Dick," cried Sir Gervaise, as he threw down the last letter of the package with no little sign of feeling; "you might take St. Paul, or even Wychecombe's dead brother, St. James the Less, and put him at court, and he would come out as thorough a blackguard, in a week!"

"That is not the common opinion concerning a court education," quietly replied the friend; "most people fancy that the place gives refinement of manners, if not of sentiment."

"Pooh—pooh—you and I have no need of a dictionary to understand each other. I call a man who never trusts to a generous motive—who thinks it always necessary to bribe or cajole—who has no idea of anything's being done without its direct *quid pro quo*, a scurvy blackguard, though he has the air and graces of Phil Stanhope, or Chesterfield, as he is now. What do you think those chaps at the Board talk of doing, by way of clinching my loyalty, at this blessed juncture?"

"No doubt to get you raised to the peerage. I see nothing so much out of the way in the thing. You are one of the oldest families in England, and the sixth Baronet by inheritance, and have a noble landed estate, which is none the worse for prize money. Sir Gervaise Oakes of Bowldero would make a very suitable Lord Bowldero."

"If it were only that, I shouldn't mind it; for nothing is easier than to refuse a peerage. I've done that twice already, and can do it a third time, at need. But one can't very well refuse promotion in his regular profession; and here, just as a true gentleman would depend upon the principles of an officer, the hackneyed consciences of your courtiers have suggested the expediency of making Gervaise Oakes an admiral of the blue, by way of sop! me, who was made vice-admiral of the red only six months since, and who takes an honest pride in boasting that every commission, from the lowest to

the highest, has been fairly earned in battle!"

"They think it a more delicate service, perhaps, for a gentleman to be true to the reigning house, when so loud an appeal is made to his natural loyalty; and, therefore, class the self-conquest with a victory at sea!"

"They are so many court-lubbers; and I should like to have an opportunity of speaking my mind to them. I'll not take the new commission; for every one must see, Dick, that it is a sop."

"Ay, that's just my notion, too, about the red ribbon, and I'll not take *that*. You have had the ribbon these ten years, have declined the peerage twice, and their only chance is the promotion. Take it you ought, and must, however, as it will be the means of pushing on some four or five poor devils, who have been wedged up to honors in this manner, ever since they were captains. I am glad they do not talk of promoting me, for I should hardly know how to refuse such a grace. There is great virtue in parchment, with all of us military men."

"Still it must be parchment fairly won. I think you are wrong, notwithstanding, Bluewater, in talking of refusing the ribbon, which is so justly your due, for a dozen different acts. There is not a man in the service who has been less rewarded for what he has done, than yourself."

"I am sorry to hear you give this as your opinion; for just at this moment, I would rather think that I have no cause of complaint, in this way, against the reigning family, or its ministers. I'm sure I was posted when quite a young man, and since that time, no one has been lifted over my head."

The Vice-admiral looked intently at his friend, for never before had he detected a feeling which betrayed, as he fancied, so settled a determination in him to quit the service of the powers that were. Acquainted from boyhood with all the workings of the other's mind, he perceived that the Rear-admiral had been endeavoring to persuade himself that no selfish or unworthy motive could be assigned to an act which he felt to proceed from disinterested chivalry, just as he himself broke out with his expression of an opinion that no officer had been less liberally rewarded for his professional service than his friend. While there is no greater mystery to a selfish manager than a man of disinterested temperament, they who feel and submit to generous impulses understand each other with an instinctive facility. When any particular individual is prone to believe that there is a predominance of good over evil in the world he inhabits, it is a sign of inexperience, or imbecility; but when one acts and reasons as if all honor and virtue are extinct, he furnishes the best possible argument against his own tendencies and character. It has often been remarked that stronger friendships are made between those who have different personal peculiarities, than between those whose sameness of feeling and impulses would be less likely to keep interest alive; but, in all cases of intimacies, there must be great identity of principles, and even of tastes in matters at all connected with motives, in order to insure respect among those whose standard of opinion is higher than common, or sympathy among those with whom it is lower.

Such was the fact, as respected Admirals Oakes and Bluewater. No two men could be less alike in temperament, or character, physically, and in some senses, morally considered; but, when it came to principles, or all those tastes or feelings that are allied to principles, there was a strong native, as well as acquired affinity. This union of sentiment was increased by common habits, and professional careers so long and so closely united as to be almost identical. Nothing was easier, consequently, than for Sir Gervaise Oakes to comprehend the workings of Admiral Bluewater's mind, as the latter endeavored to believe he had been fairly treated by the existing government. Of course, the reasoning which passed through the thoughts of Sir Gervaise, on this occasion, required much less time than we have taken to explain its nature; and, after regarding his friend intently, as already related, for a few seconds, he answered as follows, a good deal influenced, unwitting-

ly to himself, with the wish to check the other's Jacobite propensities.

"I am sorry not to be able to agree with you, Dick," he said, with some warmth. "So far from thinking you well treated, by any ministry, these twenty years, I think you have been very ill treated. Your rank you have, beyond a question; for of that no brave officer can well be deprived in a regulated service; but, have you had the commands to which you are entitled? I was a commander-in-chief when only a rear-admiral of the blue, and then how long did I wear a broad pennant, before I got a flag at all!"

"You forget how much I have been with you. When two serve together, one must command and the other must obey. So far from complaining of these Hanoverian Boards, and First Lords, it seems to me that they have always kept in view the hollowness of their claims to the throne, and have felt a desire to purchase honest men by their favors."

"You are the strangest fellow, Dick Bluewater, it has ever been my lot to fall in with. D——e me, if I believe you know always when you are ill treated. There are a dozen men in the service, who have had separate commands, and who are not half as well entitled to them as you are yourself."

"Come, come, Oakes, this is getting to be puerile, for two old fellows, turned of fifty. You very well know that I was offered just as good a fleet as this of your own, with a choice of the whole list of flag-officers below me to pick a junior from; and so we'll say no more about it. As respects their red ribbon, however, it may go a-begging for me."

Sir Gervaise was about to answer in his former vein, when a tap at the door announced the presence of another visitor. This time the door opened on the person of Galleygo, who had been included in Sir Wycherly's hospitable plan of entertaining every soul who immediately belonged to the suit of Sir Gervaise.

"What the d——l has brought you here!" exclaimed the Vice-admiral, a little warmly; for he did not relish an interruption just at that moment. "Recollect you're not on board the *Plantagenet*, but in the dwelling of a gentleman, where there are both butler and housekeeper, and who have no occasion for your advice, or authority, to keep things in order."

"Well, there, Sir Gervaise, I doesn't agree with you the least bit; for I thinks as a ship's steward—I mean a cabin steward, and a good 'un of the quality—might do a great deal of improvement in this very house. The cook and I has had a particular dialogue on them matters, already; and I mentioned to her the names of seven different dishes, every one of which she quite as good as admitted to me was just the same as so much gospel to her."

"I shall have to quarantine this fellow, in the long run, Bluewater! I do believe if I were to take him to Lambeth Palace, or even to St. James's, he'd thrust his oar into the archbishop's benedictions, or the queen's caudle cup!"

"Well, Sir Gervaise, where would be the great harm if I did? A man as knows the use of an oar can be trusted with one, even in a church, or an abbey. When your honor comes to hear what the dishes were, as Sir Wycherly's cook had never heard on, you'll think it as great a cur'osity as I do myself. If I had just leave to name 'em over, I think as both you gentlemen would look at it as remarkable."

"What are they, Galleygo?" inquired Bluewater, putting one of his long legs over the arm of an adjoining chair, in order to indulge himself in a yarn with his friend's steward, with greater freedom; for he greatly delighted in Galleygo's peculiarities; seeing just enough of the fellow to find amusement, without annoyance in them. "I'll answer for Sir Gervaise, who is always a little diffident about boasting of the superiority of a ship over a house."

"Yes, your honor, that he is—that is just one of Sir Jarvy's weak p'ints, as a body might say. Now, I never goes ashore, without trimming sharp up, and luffing athwart every person's hawse I

fall in with; which is as much as to tell 'em I belongs to a flag-ship, and a racer, and a craft as hasn't her equal on salt water; no disparagement to the bit of bunting at the mizzen-topgallant-masthead of the *Cæsar*, or to the ship that carries it. I hopes, as we are so well acquainted, Admiral Bluewater, no offense will be taken."

"When none is meant, none ought to be taken, my friend. Now let us hear your bill-of-fare."

"Well, sir, the very first dish I mentioned to Mrs. Larder, Sir Wycherly's cook, was lobscouse; and, would you believe it, gentlemen, the poor woman had never heard of it? I began with a light hand, as it might be, just not to overwhelm her with knowledge, at a blow, as Sir Jarvy captivated the French frigate with the upper tier of guns, that he might take her alive, like."

"And the lady knew nothing of a lobscouse—neither of its essence, or nature?"

"There's no essences as is ever put in a lobscouse, besides potaties, Admiral Bluewater; tho' we make 'em in the old *Planter*"—*nautice* for *Plantagenet*—"in so liquorish a fashion, you might well think they even had Jamaiky in 'em. No, potaties is the essence of lobscouse; and a very good thing is a potatie, Sir Jarvy, when a ship's company has been on salted oakum for a few months."

"Well, what was the next dish the good woman broke down under?" asked the Rear-admiral, fearful the master might order the servant to quit the room; while he, himself, was anxious to get rid of any farther political discussion.

"Well, sir, she knowed no more of a chowder, than if the sea weren't in the neighborhood, and there weren't such a thing as a fish in all England. When I talked to her of chowder, she gave in, like a Spaniard at the fourth or fifth broadside."

"Such ignorance is disgraceful, and betokens a decline in civilization! But you hoisted out more knowledge for her benefit, Galleygo—small doses of learning are poor things."

"Yes, your honor; just like weak grog—burning the priming, without starting the shot. To be sure I did, Admiral Blue. I just named to her burgoo, and then I mentioned duff (*Anglice* dough) to her, but she denied that there was any such things in the cookery-book. Do you know, Sir Jarvy, as these here shore craft get their dinners as our master gets the sun; all out of a book as it might be. Awful tidings, too, gentlemen, about the Pretender's son; and I s'pose we shall have to take the fleet up into Scotland, as I fancy them 'ere sogers will not make much of a hand in settling law?"

"And have you honored us with a visit, just to give us an essay on dishes, and to tell us what you intend to do with the fleet?" demanded Sir Gervaise, a little more sternly than he was accustomed to speak to the steward.

"Lord bless you, Sir Jarvy, I didn't dream of one or t'other! As for telling you or Admiral Blue (so the seamen used to call the second in rank), here, anything about lobscouse, or chowder, why, it would be carrying coals to New Market. I've fed you both with all such articles, when ye was nothing but young gentlemen; and when you was no longer young gentlemen, too, but a couple of sprightly luffs, of nineteen. And as for moving the fleet, I know well enough that will never happen, without our talking it over in the old *Planter's* cabin; which is a much more nat'ral place for such a discourse, than any house in England!"

"May I take the liberty of inquiring, then, what *did* bring you here?"

"That you may, with all my heart, Sir Jarvy, for I likes to answer your questions. My errand is not to your honor this time, though you are my master. It's no great matter, after all, being just to hand this bit of a letter over to Admiral Blue."

"And where did this letter come from, and how did it fall into your hands!" demanded Bluewater, looking at the superscription, the writing of which he seemed to recognize.

"It hails from Lun'nun, I hear, and they tell me it's to be a great secret that you've got it, at all. The history of the

matter is just this. An officer got in to-night, with orders for us, carrying sail as hard as his shay would bear. It seems he fell in with Master Atwood, as he made his land-fall, and being acquainted with that gentleman, he just whipped out his orders, and sent 'em off to the right man. Then he laid his course for the landing, wishing to get aboard of the *Dublin*, to which he is ordered; but falling in with our barge, as I landed, he wanted to know the where-away of Admiral Blue, here; believing him to be afloat. Some 'un telling him as I was a friend and servant of both admirals, as it might be, he turned himself over to me for advice. So I promised to deliver the letter, as I had a thousand afore, and knowed the way of doing such things; and he gives me the letter, under special orders, like; that is to say, it was to be handed to the Rear-admiral as it might be under the lee of the mizzen-staysail, or in a private fashion. Well, gentlemen, you both knows I understand that, too, and so I undertook the job."

"And I have got to be so insignificant a person that I pass for no one, in your discriminating mind, Master Galleygo!" exclaimed the Vice-admiral, sharply. "I have suspected as much, these five-and-twenty years."

"Lord bless you, Sir Jarvy, how flag-officers will make mistakes sometimes! They're mortal, I says to the people of the galley, and have their appetites false, just like a young gentlemen, when they get athwart-hawse of a body, I says. Now, I count Admiral Blue and yourself pretty much as one man, seeing that you keep few or no secrets from each other. I know'd ye both as young gentlemen, and then you loved one another like twins; and then I know'd ye as luffs, when ye'd walk the deck the whole watch, spinning yarns; and then I know'd ye as Pillardees and Arrestee, though one pillow might have answered for both; and as for Arrest, I never know'd either of ye to get into that scrape. As for telling a secret to one, I've always looked upon it as pretty much telling it to t'other."

The two Admirals exchanged glances, and the look of kindness that each met in the eyes of his friend removed every shadow that had been cast athwart their feelings by the previous discourse.

"That will do, Galleygo," returned Sir Gervaise, mildly. "You're a good fellow in the main, though a villainously rough one——"

"A little of old Boreus, Sir Jarvy," interrupted the steward, with a grim smile; "but it blows harder at sea than it does ashore. These chaps on land aren't battened down, and caulked for such weather, as we sons of Neptun' is obligated to face."

"Quite true, and so good-night. Admiral Bluewater and myself wish to confer together for half an hour; all that it is proper for you to know, shall be communicated another time."

"Good-night, and God bless your honor. Good-night, Admiral Blue; we three is the men as can keep any secret as ever floated, let it draw as much water as it pleases."

Sir Gervaise Oakes stopped in his walk, and gazed at his friend with manifest interest, as he perceived that Admiral Bluewater was running over his letter for the third time. Being now without a witness, he did not hesitate to express his apprehensions.

"'Tis as I feared, Dick!" he cried. "That letter is from some prominent partisan of Edward Stuart?"

The Rear-admiral turned his eyes on the face of his friend, with an expression that was difficult to read; and then he ran over the contents of the epistle for the fourth time.

"A set of precious rascals they are, Gervaise!" at length the Rear-admiral exclaimed. "If the whole court was culled, I question if enough honesty could be found to leaven one Puritan scoundrel. Tell me if you know this hand, Oakes? I question if you ever saw it before."

The superscription of the letter was held out to Sir Gervaise, who, after a close examination, declared himself unacquainted with the writing.

"I thought as much," resumed Bluewater, carefully tearing the signature from the bottom of the page, and burn-

ing it in a candle; "let this portion of the secret die, at least. The fellow who wrote this, has put 'confidential' at the head of his miserable scrawl; and a most confident fellow he is, for his pains. However, no man has a right to thrust himself, in this rude manner, between me and my eldest friend; and least of all will I consent to keep this piece of treachery from your knowledge. I do more than the rascal merits in concealing his name; nevertheless, I shall not deny myself of the pleasure of sending him such an answer as he deserves. Read that, Oakes, and then say, if keelhauling would be too good for the writer."

Sir Gervaise took the letter in silence, though not without great surprise, and began to peruse it. As he proceeded, the color mounted to his temples, and once he dropped his hand, to cast a look of wonder and indignation toward his companion. That the reader may see how much occasion there was for both these feelings, we shall give the communication entire. It was couched in the following words:

"DEAR ADMIRAL BLUEWATER: Our ancient friendship, and, I am proud to add, affinity of blood, unite in inducing me to write a line, at this interesting moment. Of the result of this rash experiment of the Pretender's son, no prudent man can entertain a doubt. Still, the boy may give us trouble, before he is disposed of altogether. We look to our friends, therefore, for their most efficient exertions, and most prudent co-operation. On you, every reliance is placed; and I wish I could say as much for *every flag-officer afloat*. Some distrust—unmerited, I sincerely hope—exists in a very high quarter, touching the loyalty of a certain commander-in-chief, who is so completely under your observation, that it is felt enough is done in hinting the fact to one of your political tendencies. The king said this morning, 'Vell, der isht Bluevater; of *him* we are shure as of ter sun.' You stand excellently well there, to my great delight; and I need only say, be watchful and prompt.

"Yours with the most sincere faith and attachment, my dear Bluewater, etc., etc.

"*Rear-Admiral Bluewater.*

"P. S.—I have just heard that they have sent you the red ribbon. The king himself was in this."

When Sir Gervaise had perused this precious epistle to himself, he read it slowly, and in a steady, clear voice, aloud. When he had ended, he dropped the paper, and stood gazing at his friend.

"One would think the fellow some exquisite satirist," said Bluewater, laughing. "*I* am to be vigilant, and see that *you* do not mutiny, and run away with the fleet to the Highlands, one of these foggy mornings! Carry it up into Scotland, as Galleygo has it! Now, what is your opinion of that letter?"

"That all the courtiers are knaves, and all princes ungrateful. I should think my loyalty to the good cause, if not to the man, the last in England to be suspected."

"Nor is it suspected, in the smallest degree. My life on it, neither the reigning monarch, nor his confidential servants, are such arrant dunces as to be guilty of so much weakness. No, his masterly move is intended to secure me, by creating a confidence that they think no generous-minded man would betray. It is a hook, delicately baited to catch a gudgeon, and not an order to watch a whale:"

"Can the scoundrels be so mean—nay, dare they be so bold! They must have known you would show me the letter."

"Not they—they have reasoned on my course, as they would on their own. Nothing catches a weak man sooner than a pretended confidence of this nature; and I dare say this blackguard rates me just high enough to fancy I may be duped in this flimsy manner. Put your mind at rest; King George knows he may confide in you, while I think it probable I am distrusted."

"I hope, Dick, you do not suspect my discretion! My own secret would not be half so sacred to me."

"I know that full well. Of you, I entertain no distrust either in heart or head;

of myself, I am not quite so certain. When we feel, we do not always reason; and there is as much feeling as anything else in this matter."

"Not a line is there, in all my dispatches, that goes to betray the slightest distrust of me, or any one else. You are spoken of, but it is in a manner to gratify you, rather than to alarm. Take, and read them all; I intended to show them to you, as soon as we had got through with that cursed discussion."

As Sir Gervaise concluded, he threw the whole package of letters on the table, before his friend.

"It will be time enough, when you summon me regularly to a council of war," returned Bluewater, laying the letters gently aside. "Perhaps we had better sleep on this affair; in the morning we shall meet with cooler heads, and just as warm hearts."

"Good-night, Dick," said Sir Gervaise, holding out both hands for the other to shake as he passed him, in quitting the room.

"Good-night, Gervaise; let this miserable devil go overboard, and think no more of him. I have half a mind to ask you for a leave, to-morrow, just to run up to London, and cut off his ears."

Sir Gervaise laughed and nodded his head, and the two friends parted, with feelings as kind as ever had distinguished their remarkable career.

CHAPTER VIII.

WYCHECOMBE HALL had most of the peculiarities of a bachelor's dwelling, in its internal government; nor was it in any manner behind, or, it might be better to say, before, the age, in its modes and customs connected with jollifications. When its master relaxed a little, the servants quite uniformly imitated his example. Sir Wycherly kept a plentiful table, and the servants' hall fared nearly as well as the dining-room; the single article of wine excepted. In lieu of the latter, however, was an unlimited allowance of double-brewed ale; and the difference in the potations was far more in the name than in the quality of the beverages. The master drank port; for, in the middle of the last century, few Englishmen had better wine—and port, too, that was by no means of a very remarkable delicacy, but which, like those who used it, was rough, honest, and strong; while the servant had his malt liquor of the very highest stamp and flavor. Between indifferent wine and excellent ale, the distance is not interminable; and Sir Wycherly's household was well aware of the fact, having frequently instituted intelligent practical comparisons, by means of which all but the butler and Mrs. Larder had come to the conclusion to stand by the home-brewed.

On the present occasion, not a soul in the house was ignorant of the reason why the Baronet was making a night of it. Every man, woman, and child, in or about the hall was a devoted partisan of the house of Hanover; and as soon as it was understood that this feeling was to be manifested by drinking "Success to King George, and God bless him," on the one side; and "Confusion to the Pretender, and his mad son," on the other; all under the roof entered in the duty, with a zeal that might have seated a usurper on a throne, if potations could do it.

When Admiral Bluewater, therefore, left the chamber of his friend, the signs of mirth and of a regular debauch were so very obvious, that a little curiosity to watch the result, and a disinclination to go off to his ship so soon, united to induce him to descend into the rooms below, with a view to get a more accurate knowledge of the condition of the household. In crossing the great hall, to enter the drawing-room, he encountered Galleygo, when the following discourse took place:

"I should think the master-at-arms has not done his duty, and doused the glim below, Master Steward," said the Rear-admiral, in his quiet way, as they met; "the laughing, and singing, and hiccupping are all upon a very liberal scale for a respectable country-house."

Galleygo touched the lock of hair on his forehead, with one hand, and gave his

trousers a slue with the other, before he answered; which he soon did, however, though with a voice a little thicker than was usual with him, on account of his having added a draught or two to those he had taken previously to visiting Sir Gervaise's dressing-room; and which said additional draught or two had produced some such effect on his system as the fresh drop produces on the cup that is already full.

"That's just it, Admiral Blue," returned the steward, in passing good-humor, though still sober enough to maintain the decencies, after his own fashion; "that's just it, your honor. They've passed the order below to let the lights stand for farther orders, and have turned the hands up for a frolic. Such ale as they has, stowed in the lower hold of this house, like leaguers in the ground-tier, it does a body's heart good to counterplate. All hands is bowsing out their jibs on it, sir, and the old Hall will soon be carrying as much sail as she can stagger under. It's nothing but loose-away and sheet-home."

"Aye, aye, Galleygo, this may be well enough for the people of the household, if Sir Wycherly allows it; but it ill becomes the servants of guests to fall into this disorder. If I find Tom has done anything amiss, he will hear more of it; and as your own master is not here to admonish you, I'll just take the liberty of doing it for him, since I know it would mortify him exceedingly to learn that his steward had done anything to disgrace himself."

"Lord bless your dear soul, Admiral Blue, take just as many liberties as you think fit, and I'll never pocket one on 'em. I know'd you, when you was only a young gentleman, and now you're a rear. You're close on our heels; and by the time we are a full admiral, you'll be something like a vice. I looks upon you as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh—Pillardees and Arrestees—and I no more minds a setting-down from your honor, than I does from Sir Jarvy himself."

"I believe that is true enough, Galleygo; but take my advice, and knock off with the ale for to-night. Can you tell me how the land lies with the rest of the company?"

"You couldn't have asked a better person, your honor, as I've just been passing through all the rooms, from a sort of habit I has, sir; for, d'ye see, I thought I was in the old *Planter*, and that it was my duty to overlook everything, as usual. The last pull at the ale put that notion in my head; but it's gone now, and I see how matters is. Yes, sir, the mainmast of a church isn't stiffer and more correct-like than my judgment is, at this blessed moment. Sir Wycherly guv' me a glass of his black-strap, as I ran through the dining-room, and told me to drink 'Confusion to the Pretender,' which I did, with hearty good-will; but his liquor will no more lay alongside of the ale they've down on the orlop than a Frenchman will compare with an Englishman. What's your opinion, Admiral Blue, consarning this cruise of the Pretender's son, up in the Highlands of Scotland?"

Bluewater gave a quick, distrustful glance at the steward, for he knew that the fellow was half his time in the outer cabin and pantries of the *Plantagenet*, and he could not tell how much of his many private dialogues with Sir Gervaise might have been overheard. Meeting with nothing but the unmeaning expression of one half-seas-over, his uneasiness instantly subsided.

"I think it a gallant enterprise, Galleygo," he answered; too manly even to feign what he did not believe; "but I fear as a cruise it will not bring much prize-money. You have forgotten you were about to tell me how the land lies. Sir Wycherly, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Rotherham, are still at the table, I fancy—are these all? What has become of the two young gentlemen?"

"There's none ashore, sir," said Galleygo, promptly, accustomed to give that appellation only to midshipmen.

"I mean the two Mr. Wychecombes, one of whom, I had forgot, is actually an officer."

"Yes, sir, and a most partic'lar fine

officer he is, as everybody says. Well, sir, he's with the ladies; while his namesake has gone back to the table, and has put luff upon luff, to fetch up leeway."

"And the ladies—what have they done with themselves in this scene of noisy revelry?"

"They'se in yonder state-room, yer honor. As soon as they found how the ship was heading, like all women-craft, they both makes for the best harbor they could run into. Yes, they'se yonder."

As Galleygo pointed to the door of the room he meant, Bluewater proceeded toward it, parting with the steward after a few more words of customary, but very useless caution. The tap of the Admiral was answered by Wycherly in person, who opened the door, and made way for his superior to enter, with a respectful obeisance. There was but a single candle in the little parlor, in which the two females had taken refuge from the increasing noise of the debauch; and this was due to a pious expedient of Mildred's, in extinguishing the others with a view to conceal the traces of tears that were still visible on her own and her mother's cheeks. The Rear-admiral was at first struck with this comparative obscurity; but it soon appeared to him appropriate to the feelings of the party assembled in the room. Mrs. Dutton received him with the ease she had acquired in her early life, and the meeting passed as a matter of course, with persons temporarily residing under the same roof.

"Our friends appear to be enjoying themselves," said Bluewater, when a shout from the dining-room forced itself on the ears of all present. "The loyalty of Sir Wycherly seems to be of proof."

"Oh! Admiral Bluewater," exclaimed the distressed wife, feeling momentarily getting the better of discretion; "do you —can you call such a desecration of God's image enjoyment?"

"Not justly, perhaps, Mrs. Dutton; and yet it is what millions mistake for it. This mode of celebrating any great event, and even of illustrating what we think our principles, is, I fear, a vice not only of our age, but of our country."

"And yet, neither you nor Sir Gervaise Oakes, I see, find it necessary to give such a proof of your attachment to the house of Hanover, or of your readiness to serve it with your time and persons."

"You will remember, my good lady, that both Oakes and myself are flag-officers in command, and it would never do for us to fall into a debauch in sight of our own ships. I am glad to see, however, that Mr. Wychecombe, here, prefers such society as I find him in, to the pleasure of the table."

Wycherly bowed, and Mildred cast an expressive, not to say grateful, glance toward the speaker; but her mother pursued the discourse, in which she found a little relief to her suppressed emotion.

"God be thanked for that!" she exclaimed, half unconscious of the interpretation that might be put on her words; "all that we have seen of Mr. Wychecombe would lead us to believe that this is not an unusual, or an accidental forbearance."

"So much the more fortunate for him. I congratulate you, young sir, on this triumph of principle, or of temperament, or of both. We belong to a profession in which the bottle is an enemy more to be feared than any that the King can give us. A sailor can call in no ally as efficient in subduing this mortal foe, as an intelligent and cultivated mind. The man who really thinks much, seldom drinks much; but there are hours—nay, weeks and months of idleness in a ship, in which the temptation to resort to unnatural excitement in quest of pleasure is too strong for minds that are not well fortified, to resist. This is particularly the case with commanders, who find themselves isolated by their rank, and oppressed with responsibility, in the privacy of their own cabins, and get to make a companion of the bottle, by way of seeking relief from uncomfortable thought, and of creating a society of their own. I deem the critical period of a sailor's life to be the first few years of solitary command."

"How true!—how true!" murmured Mrs. Dutton. "O, that cutter—that cruel cutter!"

The truth flashed upon the recollection

of Bluewater, at this unguarded, and instantly regretted exclamation. Many years before, when only a captain himself, he had been a member of a court-martial which cashiered a lieutenant of the name of Dutton, for grievous misconduct while in command of a cutter; the fruits of the bottle. From the first, he thought the name familiar to him; but so many similar things had happened in the course of forty years' service, that this particular incident had been partially lost in the obscurity of time. It was now completely recalled, however; and that, too, with all its attendant circumstances. The recollection served to give the Rear-admiral renewed interest in the unhappy wife and lovely daughter of the miserable delinquent. He had been applied to, at the time, for his interest in effecting the restoration of the guilty officer, or even to procure for him the hopeless station he now actually occupied; but he had sternly refused to be a party in placing any man in authority, who was the victim of a propensity that not only disgraced himself, but which, in the peculiar position of a sailor, equally jeoparded the honor of the country, and risked the lives of all around him. He was aware that the last application had been successful, by means of a court influence it was very unusual to exert in cases so insignificant; and then he had, for years, lost sight of the criminal and his fortunes. This unexpected revival of his old impressions, caused him to feel like an ancient friend of the wife and daughter; for well could he recall a scene he had with both, in which the struggle between his humanity and his principles had been so violent as actually to reduce him to tears. Mildred had forgotten the name of this particular officer, having been merely a child; but well did Mrs. Dutton remember it, and with fear and trembling had she come that day, to meet him at the Hall. The first look satisfied her that she was forgotten, and she had struggled herself, to bury in oblivion a scene which was one of the most painful of all her life. The unguarded expression mentioned, entirely changed the state of affairs.

"Mrs. Dutton," said Bluewater, kindly taking a hand of the depressed wife; "I believe we are old friends; if, after what has passed, you will allow me so to consider myself."

"Ah! Admiral Bluewater, my memory needed no admonisher to tell me that. Your sympathy and kindness are as grateful to me now, as they were in that dreadful moment, when we met before."

"And I had the pleasure of seeing this young lady, more than once, on that unpleasant occasion. This accounts for a fancy that has fairly haunted me throughout the day; for, from the moment my eye fell on Miss Mildred, it struck me that the face, and, most of all, its expression, was familiar to me. Certainly it is not a countenance, once seen, easily to be forgotten."

"Mildred was then but a child, sir, and your recollection must have been fancy indeed, as children of her age seldom make any lasting impression on the mind, particularly in the way of features."

"It is not the features that I recognize, but the expression; and that, I need not tell the young lady's mother, is an expression not so very easily forgotten. I dare say Mr. Wychecombe is ready enough to vouch for the truth of what I say."

"Hark!" exclaimed Mrs. Dutton, who was sensitively alive to any indication of the progress of the debauch. "There is great confusion in the dining-room!—I hope the gentlemen are of one mind as respects this rising in Scotland!"

"If there is a Jacobite among them, he will have a warm time of it, with Sir Wycherly, his nephew, and the vicar—all three of whom are raging lions, in the way of loyalty. There does, indeed, seem something out of the way, for those sounds, I should think, are the feet of servants, running to and fro. If the servants' hall is in the same condition I suspect, it will as much need the aid of the parlor, as the parlor can possibly——"

A rap at the door caused Bluewater to cease speaking; and as Wycherly threw open the entrance, Galleygo appeared on

the threshold, by this time reduced to the necessity of holding on by the casings.

"Well, sir," said the Rear-admiral, sternly, for he was no longer disposed to trifle with any of the crapulous set; "well, sir, what impertinence has brought you here?"

"No impertinence at all, your honor; we carries none of that, in the old *Planter*. There being no young gentlemen, hereabouts, to report proceedings, I thought I'd just step in and do the duty with my tongue. We has so many reports in our cabin, that there isn't an officer in the fleet that can make 'em better, as myself, sir."

"There are a hundred who would spend fewer words on anything. What is your business?"

"Why, sir, just to report one flag struck, and a commander-in-chief on his beam-ends."

"Good God! Nothing has happened to Sir Gervaise — speak, fellow, or I'll have you sent out of this Babel, and off to the ship, though it were midnight."

"It be pretty much that, Admiral Blue; or past six bells; as any one may see by the ship's clock on the great companion ladder; six bells, going well on to seven——"

"Your business, sir! what has happened to Sir Gervaise?" repeated Bluewater, shaking his long fore-finger menacingly at the steward.

"We are as well, Admiral Blue, as the hour we came over the *Planter's* side. Sir Jarvy will carry sail with the best on 'em, I'll answer for it, whether the ship floats in old Port Oporto, or in a brewer's vat. Let Sir Jarvy alone for them tricks—he wasn't a young gentleman for nothing."

"Have a moment's patience, sir," put in Wycherly, "and I will go myself, and ascertain the truth."

"I shall make but another inquiry," continued Admiral Bluewater, as Wycherly left the room.

"Why, d'ye see, your honor, old Sir Wycherly, who is commander-in-chief, along-shore here, has capsized in consequence of carrying sail too hard, in company with younger craft; and they're now warping him into dock to be overhauled."

"Is this all!—that was a result to be expected in such a debauch. You need not put on so ominous a face, for this, Galleygo."

"No, sir, so I thought, myself; and I only tried to look as melancholy as a young gentleman who is sent below to report a topgallant-mast over the side, or a studding-sail-boom gone in the iron. D'ye remember the time, Admiral Blue, when you thought to luff up on the old *Planter's* weather-quarter, and get between her and the French ninety on three decks, and how your stu'n-sails went, one a'ter another, just like so many musherrooms breaking in peeling?"

Galleygo, who was apt to draw his images from his two trades, might have talked on an hour, without interruption; for while he was uttering the above sentence, Wycherly returned, and reported that their host was seriously, even dangerously ill. While doing the honors of his table, he had been seized with a fit, which the vicar, a noted three-bottle man, feared was apoplexy. Mr. Rotherham had bled the patient, who was already a little better, and an express had been sent for a medical man. As a matter of course, the *convives* had left the table, and alarm was frightening the servants into sobriety. At Mrs. Dutton's earnest request, Wycherly immediately left the room again, forcing Galleygo out before him, with a view to get more accurate information concerning the Baronet's real situation; both the mother and daughter feeling a real affection for Sir Wycherly; the kind old man having won their hearts by his habitual benevolence, and a constant concern for their welfare.

"*Sic transit glorio mundi*," muttered Admiral Bluewater, as he threw his tall person, in his own careless manner, on a chair, in a dark corner of the room. "This Baronet has fallen from his throne, in a moment of seeming prosperity and revelry; why may not another do the same?"

Mrs. Dutton heard the voice, without distinguishing the words, and she felt dis-

tressed at the idea that one whom she so much respected and loved might be judged of harshly, by a man of the Rear-admiral's character.

"Sir Wycherly is one of the kindest-hearted men breathing," she said, a little hurriedly; "and there is not a better landlord in England. Then he is by no means addicted to indulgence at table, more than is customary with gentlemen of his station. His loyalty has, no doubt, carried him this evening further than was prudent, or than we could have wished."

"I have every disposition to think favorably of our poor host, my dear Mrs. Dutton, and we seamen are not accustomed to judge a *bon vivant* too harshly."

"Ah! Admiral Bluewater, you who have so widespread a reputation for sobriety and correct deportment! Well do I remember how I trembled, when I heard your name mentioned as one of the leading members of that dreadful court!"

"You let your recollections dwell too much on these unpleasant subjects, Mrs. Dutton, and I should like to see you setting an example of greater cheerfulness to your sweet daughter. I could not befriend you, then, for my oath and my duty were both against it; but, now, there exists no possible reason why I should not; while there does exist almost every possible disposition why I should. This sweet child interests me in a way I can hardly describe."

Mrs. Dutton was silent and thoughtful. The years of Admiral Bluewater did not absolutely forbid his regarding Mildred's extreme beauty with the eyes of ordinary admiration; but his language, and most of all, his character, ought to repel the intrusive suspicion. Still, Mildred was surpassingly lovely, and men were surpassingly weak in matters of love. Many a hero had passed a youth of self-command and discretion, to consummate some act of exceeding folly, of this very nature, in the decline of life; and bitter experience had taught her to be distrustful. Nevertheless, she could not, at once, bring herself to think ill of one whose character she had so long respected, and, with all the Rear-admiral's directness of manner, there was so much real and feeling delicacy, blended with the breeding of a gentleman-like sailor, that it was not easy to suppose that he had any other motives than those he chose to avow. Mildred had made many a friend, by a sweetness of countenance that was even more winning than her general beauty of face and form was attractive; and why should not this respectable old seaman be of the number?

This train of thought was interrupted by the sudden and unwelcome appearance of Dutton. He had just returned from the bedside of Sir Wycherly, and now came to seek his wife and daughter, to bid them prepare to enter the chariot, which was in waiting to convey them home.

The miserable man was not intoxicated, in the sense that deprives a man of the use of speech and limbs; but he had drunk quite enough to awaken the demon within him, and to lay bare the secrets of his true character. If anything, his nerves were better strung than common; but the wine had stirred up all the energies of a being, whose resolutions seldom took the direction of correct feeling, or of right doing. The darkness of the room, and a slight confusion which nevertheless existed in his brain, prevented him from noticing the person of his superior, seated, as the latter was, in the dark corner; and he believed himself once more alone with those who were so completely dependent on his mercy, and who had so long been the subjects of his brutality and tyranny.

"I hope Sir Wycherly is better, Dutton," the wife commenced, fearful that her husband might expose himself and her, before he was aware of the presence in which he stood. "Admiral Bluewater is as anxious as we ourselves to know his true state."

"Aye, you women are all pity and feeling for baronets and rear-admirals," answered Dutton, throwing himself rudely into a chair, with his back toward the stranger, in an attitude completely to exclude the latter from his view; "while a husband, or father, might die a hundred deaths, and not draw a look of pity from your beautiful eyes, or a kind word from your devilish tongues."

"Neither Mildred nor I merit this from you, Dutton!"

"No, you're both perfection; like mother, like child. Haven't I been, fifty times, at death's door, with this very complaint of Sir Wycherly's, and did either of you ever send for an apothecary, even?"

"You have been occasionally indisposed, Dutton, but never apoplectic; and we have always thought a little sleep would restore you; as, indeed, it always has."

"What business had you to think? Surgeons think, and medical men, and it was your duty to send for the nearest professional man, to look after one you're bound both to honor and obey. You are your own mistress, Martha, I do suppose, in a certain degree; and what can't be cured must be endured; but Mildred is my child; and I'll have her respect and love, if I break both your hearts in order to get at them."

"A pious daughter always respects her parent, Dutton," said the wife, trembling from head to foot; "but love must come willingly, or it will not come at all."

"We'll see as to that, Mrs. Martha Dutton; we'll see as to that. Come hither, Mildred; I have a word to say to you, which may as well be said at once."

Mildred, trembling like her mother, drew near; but with a feeling of filial piety, that no harshness could entirely smother, she felt anxious to prevent the father from farther exposing himself, in the presence of Admiral Bluewater. With this view, then, and with this view only, she summoned firmness enough to speak.

"Father," she said, "had we not better defer our family matters until we are alone?"

Under ordinary circumstances, Bluewater would not have waited for so palpable a hint, for he would have retired on the first appearance of anything so disagreeable as a misunderstanding between man and wife. But an ungovernable interest in the lovely girl, who stood trembling at her father's knee, caused him to forget his habitual delicacy of feeling, and to overlook what might perhaps be termed almost a law of society. Instead of moving, therefore, as Mildred had both hoped and expected, he remained motionless in his seat. Dutton's mind was too obtuse to comprehend his daughter's allusions, in the absence of ocular evidence of a stranger's presence, and his wrath was too much excited to permit him to think much of anything but his own causes of indignation.

"Stand more in front of me, Mildred," he answered, angrily. "More before my face, as becomes one who don't know her duty to her parent, and needs be taught it."

"O! Dutton," exclaimed the afflicted wife, "do not—do not—accuse Mildred of being undutiful? You know not what you say—know not her obliga—you cannot know her heart, or you would not use these cruel imputations!"

"Silence, Mrs. Martha Dutton! my business is not with you, at present, but with this young lady, to whom, I hope, I may presume to speak a little plainly, as she is my own child. Silence, then, Mrs. Martha Dutton. If my memory is not treacherous, you once stood up before God's altar with me, and there vowed to love, honor, and obey. Yes, that was the word; obey, Mrs. Martha Dutton."

"And what did you promise, at the same time, Frank?" exclaimed the wife, from whose bruised spirit this implied accusation was torn in an agony of mental suffering.

"Nothing but what I have honestly and manfully performed. I promised to provide for you; to give you food and raiment; to let you bear my name, and stand before the world in the honorable character of honest Frank Dutton's wife."

"Honorable!" murmured the wife, loud enough to be heard by both the Admiral and Mildred, and yet in a tone so smothered, as to elude the obtuse sense of hearing which long excess had left her husband. When this expressive word had broken out of her very heart, however, she succeeded in suppressing her voice, and, sinking into a chair, concealed her face in her hands, in silence.

"Mildred, come hither," resumed the brutalized parent. "You are my daugh-

ter, and whatever others have promised at the altar, and forgotten, a law of nature teaches you to obey me. You have two admirers, either of whom you ought to be glad to secure, though there is great preference between them——"

"Father!" exclaimed Mildred, every feeling of her sensitive nature revolting at this coarse allusion to a connection, and to sentiments, that she was accustomed to view as among the most sacred and private of her moral being. "Surely you cannot mean what you say."

"Like mother, like child! Let but disobedience and disrespect get possession of a wife, and they are certain to run through a whole family, even though there were a dozen children! Harkee, Miss Mildred, it is you who don't happen to know what you say, while I understand myself as well as most parents. Your mother would never acquaint you with what I feel it a duty to put plainly before your judgment; and, therefore, I expect you to listen as becomes a dutiful and affectionate child. You can secure either of these young Wychecombes, and either of them would be a good match for a poor, disgraced, sailing-master's daughter."

"Father, I shall sink through the floor, if you say another word in this cruel manner!"

"No, dear; you'll neither sink nor swim, unless it be by making a bad or a good choice. Mr. Thomas Wychecombe is Sir Wycherly's heir, and must be the next baronet, and possessor of this estate. Of course he is much the best thing, and you ought to give him the preference."

"Dutton, can you, as a father and a Christian, give such heartless counsel to your own child!" exclaimed Mrs. Dutton, inexpressibly shocked at the want of principle, as well as the want of feeling, discovered in her husband's advice.

"Mrs. Martha Dutton, I can; and believe the counsel to be anything but heartless, too. Do you wish your daughter to be the wife of a miserable signal-station keeper, when she may become Lady Wychecombe, with a little prudent management, and the mistress of this capital old house, and noble estate?"

"Father—father," interrupted Mildred soothingly, though ready to sink with shame at the idea of Admiral Bluewater's being an auditor of such a conversation; "you forget yourself and overlook my wishes. There is little probability of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe's ever thinking of me as a wife—or, indeed, of any one else's entertaining such thoughts."

"That will turn out as you manage matters, Milly. Mr. Thomas Wychecombe does not think of you as a wife, quite likely, just at this moment; but the largest whales are taken by means of very small lines, when the last are properly handled. This young lieutenant would have you to-morrow; though a more silly thing than for you two to marry could not well be hit upon. He is only a lieutenant; and though his name is so good a one, it does not appear that he has any particular right to it."

"And yet, Dutton, you were only a lieutenant when you married, and your name was nothing in the way of interest or preferment," observed the mother, anxious to interpose some new feeling between her daughter and the cruel inference left by the former part of her husband's speech. "We then thought all lay bright before us?"

"And so all would lie to this hour, Mrs. Dutton, but for that one silly act of mine. A man with the charges of a family on him, little pay, and no fortune, is driven to a thousand follies to hide his misery. You do not strengthen your case by reminding me of that imprudence. But, Mildred, I do not tell you to cut adrift this young Virginian, for he may be of use in more ways than one. In the first place, you can play him off against Mr. Thomas Wychecombe; and, in the second place, a lieutenant is likely, one day, to be a captain; and the wife of a captain in his Majesty's navy is no disreputable berth. I advise you, girl, to use this youngster as a bait to catch the heir with; and, failing a good bite, to take up with the lad himself."

This was said dogmatically, but with a coarseness of manner that fully corre-

sponded with the looseness of principles and the utter want of delicacy of feeling that alone could prompt such advice. Mrs. Dutton fairly groaned, as she listened to her husband, for never before had he so completely thrown aside the mask of decency that he ordinarily wore; but Mildred, unable to control the burst of wild emotion that came over her, broke away from the place she occupied at her father's knee, and, as if blindly seeking protection in any asylum that she fancied safe, found herself sobbing, as if her heart would break, in Admiral Bluewater's arms.

Dutton followed the ungovernable, impulsive movement, with his eye, and for the first time he became aware in whose presence he had been exposing his native baseness. Wine had not so far the mastery of him, as to blind him to all the consequences, though it did stimulate him to a point that enabled him to face the momentary mortification of his situation.

"I beg a thousand pardons, sir," he said, rising and bowing low to his superior; "I was totally ignorant that I had the honor to be in the company of Admiral Bluewater—Admiral Blue, I find Jack calls you, sir; ha, ha, ha—a familiarity which is a true sign of love and respect. I never knew a captain, or a flag-officer, that got a regular, expressive ship's name, that he wasn't the delight of the whole service. Yes, sir; I find the people call Sir Gervaise, Little Jarvy, and yourself Admiral Blue—ha, ha, ha—an infallible sign of merit in the superior, and of love in the men."

"I ought to apologize, Mr. Dutton, for making one, so unexpectedly to myself, in a family council," returned the Rear-admiral. "As for the men, they are no great philosophers, though tolerable judges of when they are well commanded, and well treated. But the hour is late, and it was my intention to sleep in my own ship, to-night. The coach of Sir Wycherly has been ordered to carry me to the landing, and I hope to have the permission to see these ladies home in it."

The answer of Dutton was given with perfect self-possession, and in a manner to show that he knew how to exercise the courtesies of life, or to receive them, when in the humor.

"It is an honor, sir, they will not think of declining, if my wishes are consulted," he said. "Come, Milly, foolish girl, dry your tears, and smile on Admiral Bluewater for his condescension. Young women, sir, hardly know how to take a joke; and our ship's humors are sometimes a little strong for them. I tell my dear wife, sometimes—'Wife,' I say, 'his Majesty can't have stout-hearted and stout-handed seamen, and women poets and die-away swains, and all in the same individual,' says I. Mrs. Dutton understands me, sir; and so does little Milly; who is an excellent girl in the main; though a little addicted to using the eye-pumps, as we have it aboard ship, sir."

"And now, Mr. Dutton, it being understood that I am to see the ladies home, will you do me the favor to inquire after the condition of Sir Wycherly. One would not wish to quit his hospitable roof, in uncertainty as to his actual situation."

Dutton was duly sensible to an awkwardness in the presence of his superior, and he gladly profited by this commission to quit the room; walking more steadily than if he had not been drinking.

All this time Mildred hung on Admiral Bluewater's shoulder, weeping and unwilling to quit a place that seemed to her, in her fearful agitation, a sort of sanctuary.

"Mrs. Dutton," said Bluewater, first kissing the cheek of his lovely burden, in a manner so parental, that the most sensitive delicacy could not have taken alarm; "you will succeed better than myself in quieting the feelings of this little trembler. I need hardly say that if I have accidentally overheard more than I ought, it is as much a secret with me, as it would be with your own brother. The characters of all cannot be affected by the mistaken and excited calculations of one; and this occasion has served to make me better acquainted with you and your admirable daughter, than I might otherwise have been, by means of years of ordinary intercourse."

"O! Admiral Bluewater, do not judge him too harshly. He has been too long at that fatal table, which has destroyed poor, dear Sir Wycherly, and knew not what he said. Never before have I seen him in such a fearful humor, or in the least disposed to trifle with, or to wound the feelings of this sweet child!"

"Her extreme agitation is a proof of this, my good madam, and shows all you can wish to say. View me as your sincere friend, and place every reliance on my discretion."

The wounded mother listened with gratitude, and Mildred withdrew from her extraordinary situation, wondering by what species of infatuation she could have been led to adopt it.

CHAPTER IX.

"Ah, Montague,
If thou be there, sweet brother, take my hand,
And with thy lips keep in my soul awhile!
Thou lov'st me not; for, brother, if thou didst,
Thy tears would wash this cold, congealed blood
That glues my lips, and will not let me speak.
Come, quickly, Montague, or I am dead."
—KING HENRY VI.

SIR WYCHERLY had actually been seized with a fit of apoplexy. It was the first serious disease he had experienced in a long life of health and prosperity; and the sight of their condescending, good-natured master, in a plight so miserable, had a surprising effect on the heated brains of all the household. Mr. Rotherham, a good three-bottle man, on emergency, had learned to bleed, and fortunately the vein he struck, as his patient still lay on the floor, where he had fallen, sent out a stream that had the effect not only to restore the Baronet to life, but, in a great measure, to consciousness. Sir Wycherly was not a hard drinker, like Dutton; but he was a fair drinker, like Mr. Rotherham, and most of the beneficed clergy of the day. Want of exercise, as he grew older, had as much influence in producing his attack as excess of wine; and there were already strong hopes of his surviving it, aided as he was by a good constitution. The apothecary had reached the Hall, within five minutes after the attack, having luckily been prescribing to the gardener; and the physician and surgeon of the family were both expected in the course of the morning.

Sir Gervaise Oakes had been acquainted with the state of his host, by his own valet, as soon as it was known in the servants' hall, and being a man of action, he did not hesitate to proceed at once to the chamber of the sick, to offer his own aid, in the absence of that which might be better.

At the door of the chamber, he met Atwood, who had been summoned from his pen, and they entered together, the Vice-admiral feeling for a lancet in his pocket, for he, too, had acquired the art of the blood-letter. They now learned the actual state of things.

"Where is Bluewater?" demanded Sir Gervaise, after regarding his host a moment with commiseration and concern. "I hope that he has not yet left the house."

"He is still here, Sir Gervaise, but I should think on the point of quitting us. I heard him say, that notwithstanding all Sir Wycherly's kind plans to detain him, he intended to sleep in his own ship."

"That I've never doubted, though I've affected to believe otherwise. Go to him, Atwood, and say I beg he will pull within hail of the *Plantagenet*, as he goes off, and desire Mr. Magrath to come ashore, as soon as possible. There shall be a conveyance at the landing to bring him here; and he may order his own surgeon to come also, if it be agreeable to himself."

With these instructions the secretary left the room; while Sir Gervaise turned to Tom Wychecombe, and said a few of the words customary on such melancholy occasions.

"I think there is hope, sir," he added, "yes, sir, I think there is hope; though your honored relative is no longer young—still, this early bleeding has been a great thing; and if we can gain a little time for poor Sir Wycherly, our efforts will not be thrown away. Sudden death is awful, sir, and few of us are prepared for it, either in mind or affairs. We sail-

ors have to hold our lives in our hands, it is true, but then it is for king and country; and we hope for mercy on all who fall in the discharge of their duties. For my part, I am never unprovided with a will, and that disposes of all the interests of this world, while I humbly trust in the Great Mediator for the hereafter. I hope Sir Wycherly is equally provident as to his worldly affairs?"

"No doubt my dear uncle could wish to leave certain trifling memorials behind him to a few of his intimates," returned Tom, with a dejected countenance; "but he has not been without a will, I believe, for some time; and I presume you will agree with me in thinking he is not in a condition to make one, now, were he unprovided in that way?"

"Perhaps not exactly at this moment, though a rally might afford an opportunity. The estate is entailed, I think Mr. Dutton told me, at dinner."

"It is, Sir Gervaise, and I am the unworthy individual who is to profit by it, according to the common notions of men, though Heaven knows I shall consider it anything but a gain; still, I am the unworthy individual who is to be benefited by my uncle's death."

"Your father was the Baronet's next brother?" observed Sir Gervaise, casually, a shade of distrust passing athwart his mind, though coming from what source, or directed to what point, he was himself totally unable to say. "Mr. Baron Wychecombe, I believe, was your parent?"

"He was, Sir Gervaise, and a most tender and indulgent father I ever found him. He left me his earnings, some seven hundred a year, and I am sure the death of Sir Wycherly is as far from my necessities as it is from my wishes."

"Of course you will succeed to the baronetcy, as well as to the estate?" mechanically asked Sir Gervaise, led on by the supererogatory expressions of Tom himself, rather than by a vulgar curiosity, to ask questions that under other circumstances he might have thought improper.

"Of course, sir. My father was the only surviving brother of Sir Wycherly; the only one who ever married; and I am his eldest child. Since this melancholy event has occurred, it is quite fortunate that I lately obtained this certificate of the marriage of my parents—is it not, sir?"

Here Tom drew from his pocket a soiled piece of paper, which professed to be a certificate of the marriage of Thomas Wychecombe, barrister, with Martha Dodd, spinster, etc., etc. The document was duly signed by the rector of a parish church in Westminster, and bore a date sufficiently old to establish the legitimacy of the person who held it. This extraordinary precaution produced the very natural effect of increasing the distrust of the Vice-admiral, and, in a slight degree, of giving it a direction.

"You go well armed, sir," observed Sir Gervaise dryly. "Is it your intention, when you succeed, to carry the patent of the baronetcy, and the title-deeds, in your pocket?"

"Ah! I perceive my having this document strikes you as odd, Sir Gervaise, but it can be easily explained. There was a wide difference in rank between my parents, and some ill-disposed persons have presumed so far to reflect on the character of my mother as to assert that she was not married at all."

"In which case, sir, you would do well to cut off half-a-dozen of their ears."

"The law is not to be appeased in that way, Sir Gervaise. My dear parent used to inculcate on me the necessity of doing everything according to law; and I endeavor to remember his percepts. He avowed his marriage on his death-bed, made all due atonement to my respected and injured mother, and informed me in whose hands I should find this very certificate; I only obtained it this morning, which fact will account for its being in my pocket, at this melancholy and unexpected crisis in my beloved uncle's constitution."

The latter part of Tom's declaration was true enough; for, after having made all the necessary inquiries, and obtained the handwriting of a clergyman who was long since dead, he had actually forged the certificate that day, on a piece of soiled paper, that bore the watermark of

1720. His language, however, contributed to alienate the confidence of his listener; Sir Gervaise being a man who was so much accustomed to directness and fair-dealing himself, as to feel disgust at anything that had the semblance of cant or hypocrisy. Nevertheless, he had his own motives for pursuing the subject; the presence of another at the bedside of the sufferer being just then necessary.

"And this Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe," he said; "he who has so much distinguished himself of late; your uncle's namesake; is it true that he is not allied to your family?"

"Not in the least, Sir Gervaise," answered Tom, with one of his sinister smiles. "He is only a Virginian, you know, sir, and cannot well belong to us. I have heard my uncle say, often, that the young gentleman must be descended from an old servant of his father's who was transported for stealing silver out of a shop on Ludgate Hill, and who was arrested for passing himself off as one of the Wychecombe family. They tell me, Sir Gervaise, that the colonies are pretty much made up of persons descended from that sort of ancestors."

"I cannot say that I have found it so; though, when I commanded a frigate, I served several years on the North American station. The larger portion of the Americans, like much the larger portion of the English, are humble laborers, established in a remote colony, where civilization is not far advanced, wants are many, and means few; but, in the way of character, I am not certain that they are not quite on a level with those they left behind them; and, as to the gentry of the colonies, I have seen many men of the best blood of the mother country among them; younger sons, and their descendants, as a matter of course, but of an honorable and respected ancestry."

"Well, sir, this surprises me; and it is not the general opinion, I am persuaded! Certainly, it is not the fact as respects the gentleman — stranger, I might call him, for stranger he is at Wychecombe— who has not the least right to pretend to belong to us."

"Did you ever know him to lay claim to that honor, sir?"

"Not directly, Sir Gervaise; though I am told he has made many hints to that effect, since he landed here to be cured of his wound. It would have been better had he presented his rights to the landlord, than to present them to the tenants, I think you will allow, as a man of honor, yourself, Sir Gervaise?"

"I can approve of nothing clandestine in matters that require open and fair dealing, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe. But I ought to apologize for thus dwelling on your family affairs, which concerns me only as I feel an interest in the wishes and happiness of my new acquaintance, my excellent host."

"Sir Wycherly has property in the funds that is not entailed—quite £1,000 a year, beyond the estates—and I know he has left a will," continued Tom; who, with the short-sightedness of a rogue, flattered himself with having made a favorable impression on his companion, and who was desirous of making him useful to himself, in an emergency that he felt satisfied must terminate in the speedy death of his uncle. "Yes, a good £1,000 a year, in the fives; money saved from his rents, in a long life. This will probably has some provision in favor of my younger brothers; and perhaps of this namesake of his"—Tom was well aware that it devised every shilling, real and personal, to himself—"for a kinder heart does not exist on earth. In fact, this will my uncle put in my possession, as heir-at-law, feeling it due to my pretensions, I suppose; but I never have presumed to look into it."

Here was another instance of excessive finesse, in which Tom awakened suspicion by his very efforts to allay it. It seemed highly improbable to Sir Gervaise, that a man like the nephew could long possess his uncle's will, and feel no desire to ascertain its contents. The language of the young man was an indirect admission that he might have examined the will if he would; and the Admiral felt disposed to suspect that what he might thus readily have done, he actually had done. The

dialogue, however, terminated here; Dutton just at that moment entering the room on the errand on which he had been sent by Admiral Bluewater, and Tom joining his old acquaintance as soon as the latter made his appearance. Sir Gervaise Oakes was too much concerned for the condition of his host, and had too many cares of his own, to think deeply or long on what had just passed between himself and Tom Wychecombe. Had they separated that night, what had been said, and the unfavorable impressions it had made, would have been soon forgotten; but circumstances subsequently conspired to recall the whole to his mind, of which the consequences will be related in the course of our narrative.

Dutton appeared to be a little shocked as he gazed upon the pallid features of Sir Wycherly, and he was not sorry when Tom led him aside, and began to speak confidentially of the future, and of the probable speedy death of his uncle. Had there been one present, gifted with the power of reading the thoughts and motives of men, a deep disgust of human frailties must have come over him, as these two impure spirits betrayed to him their cupidity and cunning. Outwardly, they were friends mourning over a mutual probable loss; while inwardly, Dutton was endeavoring to obtain such a hold of his companion's confidence as might pave the way to his own future preferment to the high and unhoped-for station of a rich baronet's father-in-law; while Tom thought only of so far mystifying the master, as to make use of him, on an emergency, as a witness to establish his own claims. The manner in which he endeavored to effect his object, however, must be left to the imagination of the reader, as we have matters of greater moment to record at this particular juncture.

From the time Sir Wycherly was laid on his bed, Mr. Rotherham had been seated at the sick man's side, watching the course of his attack, and ready to interpret any of the patient's feebly and indistinctly expressed wishes. We say indistinctly, because the Baronet's speech was slightly affected with that species of paralysis which reduces the faculty to the state that is vulgarly called thick-tongued. Although a three-bottle man, Mr. Rotherham was far from being without his devout feelings, on occasions, discharging all the clerical functions with as much unction as the habits of the country, and the opinions of the day, ordinarily exacted of divines. He had even volunteered to read the prayers for the sick, as soon as he perceived that the patient's recollection had returned; but this kind offer had been declined by Sir Wycherly, under the clearer views of fitness, that the near approach of death is apt to give, and which views left a certain consciousness that the party assembled was not in the best possible condition for that sacred office. Sir Wycherly revived so much, at last, as to look about him with increasing consciousness; and at length his eyes passed slowly over the room, scanning each person singly, and with marked deliberation.

"I know you all—now," said the kind-hearted Baronet, though always speaking thick, and with a little difficulty; "am sorry to give—much trouble. I have—little time to spare."

"I hope not, Sir Wycherly," put in the vicar, in a consolatory manner; "you have had a sharp attack, but then there is a good constitution to withstand it."

"My time—short—feel it here," rejoined the patient, passing his hand over his forehead.

"Note that, Dutton," whispered Tom Wychecombe. "My poor uncle intimates himself that his mind is a little shaken. Under such circumstances, it would be cruel to let him injure himself with business."

"It cannot be done legally, Mr. Thomas. I should think Admiral Oakes would interfere to prevent it."

"Rotherham," continued the patient, "I will—settle with—world; then, give—thoughts—to God. Have we—guests—the house? Men of family—character?"

"Certainly, Sir Wycherly; Admiral Oakes is in the room, even; and Admiral Bluewater is, I believe, still in the house. You invited both to pass the night with you."

"I remember it—now; my mind—still—confused;" here Tom Wychecombe again nudged the master; "Sir Gervaise Oakes—an Admiral—ancient Baronet—man of high honor. Admiral Bluewater, too—relative—Lord Bluewater: gentleman—universal esteem. You, too, Rotherham; with my dear brother James—St. James—used to call him—had been living; you—good neighbor—Rotherham."

"Can I do anything to prove it, my dear Sir Wycherly? Nothing would make me happier than to know, and to comply with, all your wishes, at a moment so important!"

"Let all quit—room—but yourself—head feels worse—I cannot delay——"

"'Tis cruel to distress my beloved uncle with business or conversation, in his present state," interposed Tom Wychecombe, with emphasis, and in a slight degree with authority.

All not only felt the truth of this, but all felt that the speaker, by his consanguinity, had a clear right to interfere, in the manner he had. Still Sir Gervaise Oakes had great reluctance in yielding to this remonstrance; for, to the distrust he had imbibed of Tom Wychecombe, was added an impression that his host wished to reveal something of interest, in connection with his new favorite, the Lieutenant. He felt compelled, notwithstanding, to defer to the acknowledged nephew's better claims, and he refrained from interfering. Fortunately, Sir Wycherly was yet in a state to enforce his own wishes.

"Let all quit—room," he repeated, in a voice that was startling by its unexpected firmness, and equally unexpected distinctness. "All but Sir Gervaise Oakes—Admiral Bluewater—Mr. Rotherham. Gentlemen—favor to remain—rest depart."

Accustomed to obey their master's orders, more especially when given in a tone so decided, the domestics quitted the room, accompanied by Dutton; but Tom Wychecombe saw fit to remain, as if his presence were a matter of course.

"Do me — favor — withdraw — Mr. Wychecombe," resumed the Baronet, after fixing his gaze on his nephew for some time, as if expecting him to retire without this request.

"My beloved uncle, it is I—Thomas, your own brother's son, your next of kin—waiting anxiously by your respected bedside. Do not—do not confound me with strangers. Such a forgetfulness would break my heart!"

"Forgive me, nephew—but I wish—alone with these gentle—head getting confused——"

"You see how it is, Sir Gervaise Oakes—you see how it is, Mr. Rotherham. Ah! there goes the coach that is to take Admiral Bluewater to his boat. My uncle wished for three witnesses to something, and I can remain as one of the three."

"Is it your pleasure, Sir Wycherly, to wish to see us alone?" asked Sir Gervaise, in a manner that showed authority would be exercised to enforce his request, should the uncle still desire the absence of his nephew.

A sign from the sick man indicated the affirmative, and that in a manner too decided to admit of mistake.

"You perceive, Mr. Wychecombe, what are your uncle's wishes," observed Sir Gervaise, very much in the way that a well-bred superior intimates to an inferior the compliance he expects; "I trust his desire will not be disregarded at a moment like this."

"I am Sir Wycherly Wychecombe's next of kin," said Tom, in a slightly bullying tone; "and no one has the same right as a relative, and, I may say, his heir, to be at his bedside."

"That depends on the pleasure of Sir Wycherly Wychecombe himself, sir. He is master here; and, having done me the honor to invite me under his roof as a guest, and, now, having requested to see me alone with others he has expressly named—one of whom you are not—I shall conceive it my duty to see his wishes obeyed."

This was said in the firm, quiet way, that the habit of command had imparted to Sir Gervaise's manner; and Tom began to see it might be dangerous to resist. It was important, too, that one of the Vice-admiral's character and station should

have naught to say against him, in the event of any future controversy; and, making a few professions of respect, and of his desire to please his uncle, Tom quitted the room.

A gleam of satisfaction shot over the sick man's countenance, as his nephew disappeared; and then his eye turned slowly toward the faces of those who remained.

"Bluewater," he said, the thickness of his speech, and the general difficulty of utterance, seeming to increase; "the Rear-admiral—I want all—respectable—witnesses in the house."

"My friend has left us, I understand," returned Sir Gervaise, "insisting on his habit of never sleeping out of his ship; but Atwood must soon be back; I hope he will answer!"

A sign of assent was given; and, then, there was the pause of a minute or two, ere the secretary made his appearance. As soon, however, as he had returned, the three collected around the Baronet's bed, not without some of the weakness which men are supposed to inherit from their common mother Eve, in connection with the motive for this singular proceeding of the Baronet.

"Sir Gervaise—Rotherham—Mr. Atwood," slowly repeated the patient, his eye passing from the face of one to that of another, as he uttered the name of each; "three witnesses—that will do—Thomas said — must have *three* — three good names."

"What can we do to serve you, Sir Wycherly?" inquired the Admiral, with real interest. "You have only to name your requests, to have them faithfully attended to."

"Old Sir Michael Wychecombe, Kt.—two wives Margery and Joan. Two wives—two sons—half blood—Thomas, James, Charles, and Gregory, *whole*—Sir Reginald Wychecombe, *half*. Understand—hope—gentlemen?"

"This is not being very clear, certainly," whispered Sir Gervaise; "but perhaps, by getting hold of the other end of the rope, we may under-run it, as we sailors say, and come at the meaning—we will let the poor man proceed, therefore. Quite plain, my dear sir, and what have you next to tell us? You left off with saying only half about Sir Reginald."

"Half-blood; only half—Tom and the rest, whole. Sir Reginald, no *nullius*—young Tom, a *nullius*."

"A *nullius*, Mr. Rotherham! You understand Latin, sir; what can a *nullius* mean? No such rope in the ship, hey, Atwood?"

"*Nullius*, or *nullius*, as it ought sometimes to be pronounced, is the genitive case, singular, of the pronoun *nullus; nullus, nulla, nullum;* which means, 'no man,' 'no woman,' 'no thing.' *Nullius* means, 'of no man,' 'of no woman,' 'of no thing.'"

The Vicar gave this explanation, much in the way a pedagogue would have explained the matter to a class.

"Aye, aye—any school-boy could have told that which is the first form learning. But what the devil can 'Nom. *nullus, nulla, nullum;* gen. *nullius, nullius, nullius,*' have to do with Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, the nephew and heir of the present Baronet?"

"That is more than I can inform you, Sir Gervaise," answered the vicar, stiffly; "but for the Latin, I will take upon myself to answer, that it is good."

Sir Gervaise was too well-bred to laugh, but he found it difficult to suppress a smile.

"Well, Sir Wycherly," resumed the Vice-admiral, "this is quite plain—Sir Reginald is only half, while your nephew Tom, and the rest, are whole—Margery and Joan, and all that. Anything more to tell us, my dear sir?"

"Tom not whole—*nullus*, I wish to say. Sir Reginald half—no *nullus*."

"This is like being at sea a week, without getting a sight of the sun! I am all adrift, now, gentlemen."

"Sir Wycherly does not attend to his cases," put in Atwood, dryly. "At one time, he is in the genitive, and then he gets back to the nominative; which is leaving us in the vocative."

"Come, come, Atwood, none of your gunroom wit, on an occasion so solemn as

this. My dear Sir Wycherly, have you anything more to tell us? I believe we perfectly understand you, now. Tom is not whole; you wish to say *nullus*, and not to say *nullius*. Sir Reginald is only half, but he is not *nullus*."

"Yes, sir—that is it," returned the old man, smiling. "Half, but no *nullus*. Change my mind—seen too much of the other, lately—Tom, my nephew—want to make him my heir."

"This is getting clearer, out of all question. You wish to make your nephew, Tom, your heir. But the law does that already, does it not, my dear sir? Mr. Baron Wychecombe was the next brother of the baronet; was he not, Mr. Rotherham?"

"So I have always understood, sir; and Mr. Thomas Wychecombe must be the heir-at-law."

"No—no; *nullus—nullus*," repeated Sir Wycherly, with so much eagerness as to make his voice nearly indistinct; "Sir Reginald—Sir Reginald—Sir Reginald."

"And pray, Mr. Rotherham, who may this Sir Reginald be? Some old baronet of the family, I presume."

"Not at all, sir; it is Sir Reginald Wychecombe of Wychecombe-Regis, Herts; a baronet of Queen Anne's time, and a descendant from a cadet of this family, I am told."

"This is getting on soundings; I had taken it into my head this Sir Reginald was some old fellow of the reign of one of the Plantagenets. Well, Sir Wycherly, do you wish us to send an express into Hertfordshire, in quest of Sir Reginald Wychecombe, who is quite likely your executor? Do not give yourself the pain to speak; a sign will answer."

Sir Wycherly seemed struck with the suggestion, which, the reader will readily understand, was far from being his real meaning; and then he smiled, and nodded his head in approbation.

Sir Gervaise, with the promptitude of a man of business, turned to the table where the vicar had written notes to the medical men, and dictated a short letter to his secretary. The letter he signed, and in five minutes Atwood left the room, to order it to be immediately forwarded by express. When this was done, the Admiral rubbed his hands, in satisfaction, like a man who felt he had got himself cleverly out of a knotty difficulty.

"I don't see, after all, Mr. Rotherham," he observed to the vicar, as they stood together in a corner of the room, waiting the return of the secretary; "what he lugged in that school-boy Latin for—*nullus, nulla, nullum!* Can you possibly explain that?"

"Not unless it was Sir Wycherly's desire to say that Sir Reginald, being descended from a younger son, was nobody—as yet, had no woman—and I believe he is not married—and was poor, or had 'nothing.'"

"And is Sir Wycherly such a desperate scholar, that he would express himself in this hieroglyphical manner on what I fear will prove his death-bed?"

"Why, Sir Gervaise, Sir Wycherly was educated like all other young gentlemen, but has forgotten most of his classics, in the course of a long life of ease and affluence. Is it not probable, now, that his recollection has returned to him suddenly, in consequence of this affection of the head? I think I have read of some curious instances of these reviving memories on a death-bed, or after a fit of sickness."

"Aye, that you may have done!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, smiling; "and poor, good Sir Wycherly must have begun afresh, at the very place where he left off. But here is Atwood again."

After a short consultation, the three chosen witnesses returned to the bedside, the Admiral being spokesman.

"The express will be off in ten minutes, Sir Wycherly," he said; "and you may hope to see your relatives in the course of the next two or three days."

"Too late—too late," murmured the patient who had an inward consciousness of his true situation; "too late—turn the will round—Sir Reginald, Tom; Tom, Sir Reginald. Turn the will round."

"Turn the will round?—this is very explicit, gentlemen, to those who can understand it. Sir Reginald, Tom; Tom, Sir Reginald. At all events, it is clear

that his mind is dwelling on the disposition of his property, since he speaks of wills. Atwood, make a note of these words, that there need be no mistake. Wonder he has said nothing of our brave young lieutenant, his namesake. There can be no harm, Mr. Rotherham, in just mentioning that fine fellow to him, in a moment like this?"

"I see none, sir. It is our duty to remind the sick of their duties."

"Do you not wish to see your young namesake Lieutenant *Wycherly* Wychecombe, Sir Wycherly?" asked the Admiral; sufficiently emphasizing the Christian name. "He must be in the house, and I dare say would be happy to obey your wishes."

"I hope he is well, sir—fine young gentleman—honor to the name, sir."

"Quite true, Sir Wycherly; and honor to the nation, too."

"Didn't know Virginia was a nation—so much the better—fine young Virginian, sir."

"Of your family, no doubt, Sir Wycherly, as well as of your name," added the Admiral, who secretly suspected the young sailor of being a son of the Baronet, notwithstanding all he had heard to the contrary. "An exceedingly fine young man, and an honor to any house in England!"

"I suppose they have houses in Virginia—bad climate; houses necessary. No relative, sir, probably a *nullus*. Many Wychecombes, *nulluses*. Tom a *nullus*—this young gentleman a *nullus*—Wychecombes of Surrey, all *nulluses*—Sir Reginald, no *nullus;* but a half—Thomas, James, Charles, and Gregory, all whole. My brother, Baron Wychecombe, told me—before he died."

"Whole what, Sir Wycherly?" asked the Admiral, a little vexed at the obscurity of the other's language.

"Blood—whole blood, sir. Capital law, Sir Gervaise; had it from the Baron—first hand."

Now, one of the peculiarities of England is, that, in the division of labor, few know anything material about the law, except the professional men. Even their knowledge is divided and sub-divided, in a way that makes a very fair division of profit. Thus the conveyancer is not a barrister; the barrister is not an attorney; and the chancery practitioner would be an unsafe adviser for one of the purely law courts. That particular division of the common law, which Baron Wychecombe had mentioned to his brother, as the rule of the half-blood, has been set aside, or modified, by statute, within the last ten years; but few English laymen would be at all likely to know of such a law of descent even when it existed; for while it did violence to every natural sentiment of right, it lay hidden in the secrets of the profession. Were a case stated to a thousand intelligent Englishmen, who had not read law, in which it was laid down that brothers, by different mothers, though equally sons of the founder of the estate, could not take from each other, unless by devise or entail, the probability is that quite nine in ten would deny the existence of any rule so absurd; and this, too, under the influence of feelings that were creditable to their sense of natural justice.

Nevertheless, such was one of the important provisions of the "perfection of reason," until the recent reforms in English law; and it has struck us as surprising, that an ingenious writer of fiction, who has recently charmed his readers with a tale, the interest of which turns principally on the vicissitudes of practice, did not bethink him of this peculiar feature of his country's laws; inasmuch as it would have supplied mystery sufficient for a dozen ordinary romances, and improbabilities enough for a hundred. That Sir Gervaise and his companions should be ignorant of the "law of the half-blood," is consequently very much a matter of course; and no one ought to be surprised that the worthy Baronet's repeated allusions to the "whole," and the "half," were absolutely enigmas, which neither had the knowledge necessary to explain.

"What can the poor fellow mean?" demanded the Admiral, more concerned than he remembered ever before to have been, on any similar occasion. "One could wish to serve him as much as possible, but all this about '*nullus*,' and 'whole-blood,'

and 'half,' is so much gibberish to me —can you make anything of it—hey, Atwood?"

"Upon my word, Sir Gervaise, it seems a matter for a judge, rather than for man-of-war's men, like ourselves."

"It certainly can have no connection with this rising of the Jacobites? That is an affair likely to trouble a loyal subject, in his last moments, Mr. Rotherham!"

"Sir Wycherly's habits and age forbid the idea that he knows more of that, sir, than is known to us all. His request, however, to 'turn the will round,' I conceive to be altogether explicit. Several capital treatises have appeared lately on the 'human will,' and I regret to say, my honored friend and patron has not always been quite as orthodox on that point as I could wish. I, therefore, consider his words as evidence of a hearty repentance."

Sir Gervaise looked about him, as was his habit when any droll idea crossed his mind; but again suppressing the inclination to smile, he answered with suitable gravity:

"I understand you, sir; you think all these inexplicable terms are connected with Sir Wycherly's religious feelings. You may certainly be right, for it exceeds my knowledge to connect them with anything else. I wish, notwithstanding, he had not disowned this noble young lieutenant of ours! Is it quite certain the young man is a Virginian?"

"So I have always understood it, sir. He has never been known in this part of England, until he was landed from a frigate in the roads, to be cured of a serious wound. I think none of Sir Wycherly's allusions have the least reference to *him*."

Sir Gervaise Oakes now joined his hands behind his back, and walked several times, quarter-deck fashion, to and fro, in the room. At each turn his eyes glanced toward the bed, and he ever found the gaze of the sick man anxiously fastened on himself. This satisfied him that religion had nothing to do with his host's manifest desire to make himself understood; and his own trouble was greatly increased. It seemed to him as if the dying man was making incessant appeals to his aid, without it being in his power to afford it. It was not possible for a generous man, like Sir Gervaise, to submit to such a feeling without an effort; and he soon went to the side of the bed, again, determined to bring the affair to some intelligible issue.

"Do you think, Sir Wycherly, you could write a few lines, if we put pen, ink, and paper before you?" he asked, as a sort of desperate remedy.

"Impossible—can hardly see; have got no strength — stop — will try — if you please."

Sir Gervaise was delighted with this, and he immediately directed his companions to lend their assistance. Atwood and the vicar bolstered the man up, and the Admiral put the writing materials before him, substituting a large quarto Bible for a desk. Sir Wycherly, after several abortive attempts, finally got the pen in his hand, and with great difficulty traced six or seven nearly illegible words, running the line diagonally across the paper. By this time his powers failed him altogether, and he sank back, dropping the pen, and closing his eyes in a partial insensibility. At this critical instant, the surgeon entered, and at once put an end to the interview, by taking charge of the patient, and directing all but one or two necessary attendants to quit the room.

The three chosen witnesses of what had just passed repaired together to a parlor: Atwood, by a sort of mechanical habit, taking with him the paper on which the Baronet had scrawled the words just mentioned. This, by a sort of mechanical use, also, he put into the hands of Sir Gervaise, as soon as they entered the room; much as he would have laid before his superior an order to sign, or a copy of a letter to the secretary of the Navy Board.

"This is as bad as the '*nullus!*'" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, after endeavoring to decipher the scrawl in vain. "What is this first word, Mr. Rotherham—'Irish,' is it not—hey, Atwood?"

"I believe it is no more than 'I-n,' stretched over much more paper than is necessary."

"You are right enough, vicar; and the next word is 'the,' though it looks like a *cheviaux-de-frise*—what follows? It looks like 'man-of-war,' Atwood?"

"I beg your pardon, Sir Gervaise; this first letter is what I should call an elongated *n*—the next is certainly an *a*—the third looks like the waves of a river—ah! it is an *m*—and the last is an *e*—n-a-m-e—that makes 'name,' gentlemen."

"Yes," eagerly added the vicar, "and the two next words are 'of God.'"

"Then it is religion, after all, that was on the poor man's mind!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise in a slight degree disappointed, if the truth must be told. "What's this? A-m-e-n—'Amen'—why, it's a sort of prayer."

"This is the form in which it is usual to commence wills, I believe, Sir Gervaise," observed the secretary, who had written many a one on board ship, in his day. "'In the name of God, Amen.'"

"By George, you're right, Atwood; and the poor man was trying all the while to let us know how he wished to dispose of his property! What could he mean by the *nullus*—it is possible that the old gentleman has nothing to leave?"

"I'll answer for it, Sir Gervaise, that is not the true explanation," the vicar replied. "Sir Wycherly's affairs are in the best order; and, besides the estate, he has a large sum in the funds."

"Well, gentlemen, we can do no more to-night. A medical man is already in the house, and Bluewater will send ashore one or two others from the fleet. In the morning, if Sir Wycherly is in a state to converse, this matter shall be attended to."

The party now separated; a bed being provided for the vicar, and the Admiral and his secretary retiring to their respective rooms.

CHAPTER X.

"Bid physicians talk our veins to temper,
And with an argument new-set a pulse;
Then think, my lord, of reasoning into love."
—YOUNG.

WHILE the scene just related took place in the chamber of a sick man, Admiral Bluewater, Mrs. Dutton, and Mildred left the house, in the old family-coach. The Rear-admiral had pertinaciously determined to adhere to his practice of sleeping in his ship; and the manner in which he had offered seats to his two fair companions—for Mrs. Dutton still deserved to be thus termed—has already been seen. The motive was simply to remove them from any further brutal exhibitions of Dutton's cupidity, while he continued in his present humor; and, thus influenced, it is not probable that the gallant old sailor would be likely to dwell, more than was absolutely necessary, on the unpleasant scene of which he had been a witness. In fact, no allusion was made to it, during the quarter of an hour the party was driving from the Hall to the station-house. They all spoke, with regret—Mildred with affectionate tenderness, even—of poor Sir Wycherly; and several anecdotes, indicative of his goodness of heart, were eagerly related to Bluewater, by the two females, as the carriage moved heavily along. In the time mentioned, the vehicle drew up before the door of the cottage, and all three alighted.

If the morning of that day had been veiled in mist, the sun had set in as cloudless a sky as is often arched above the island of Great Britain. The night was what in that region is termed a clear moonlight. It was certainly not the mimic day that is so often enjoyed in purer atmospheres, but the panorama of the headland was clothed in a soft, magical sort of semi-distinctness, that rendered objects sufficiently obvious, and exceedingly beautiful. The rounded, shorn swells of land hove upward to the eye, verdant and smooth; while the fine oaks of the park formed a shadowy background to the picture, inland. Seaward, the ocean was glittering, like a reversed plane

of the firmament, far as eye could reach. If our own hemisphere, or rather this latitude, may boast of purer skies than are enjoyed by the mother country, the latter has a vast superiority in the tint of the water. While the whole American coast is bounded by a dull-looking sheet of sea-green, the deep blue of the wide ocean appears to be carried close home to the shores of Europe. This glorious tint, from which the term "ultramarine" has been derived, is most remarkable in the Mediterranean, that sea of delights, but is met with all along the rock-bound coasts of the peninsula of Spain and Portugal, extending through the British Channel, until it is in a measure lost on the shoals of the North Sea, to be revived, however, in the profound depths of the ocean that laves the wild, romantic coast of Norway.

"'Tis a glorious night!" exclaimed Bluewater, as he handed Mildred, the last, from the carriage; "and one can hardly wish to enter a cot, let it swing ever so lazily."

"Sleep is out of the question," returned Mildred, sorrowfully. "These are nights in which even the weary are reluctant to lose their consciousness; but who can sleep while there is uncertainty about dear Sir Wycherly?"

"I rejoice to hear you say this, Mildred"—for so the Admiral had unconsciously, and unrepelled, begun to call his sweet companion—"I rejoice to hear you say this, for I am an inveterate star-gazer and moon-ite; and I shall hope to persuade you and Mrs. Dutton to waste yet another hour with me, in walking on this height. Ah! yonder is Sam Yoke, my cockswain, waiting to report the barge. I can send Sir Gervaise's message to the surgeons, by deputy, and there will be no occasion for my hastening from this lovely spot, and pleasant company."

The orders were soon given to the cockswain. A dozen boats, it would seem, were in waiting for officers ashore, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour; and directions were sent for two of them to pull off and obtain the medical men.

The coach was sent round to receive the latter, and then all was tranquil, again, on the height. Mrs. Dutton entered the house, to attend to some of her domestic concerns, while the Rear-admiral took the arm of Mildred, and they walked together to the verge of the cliffs.

A fairer moonlight picture seldom offered itself to a seaman's eye than that which now lay before the sight of Admiral Bluewater and Mildred. Beneath them rode the fleet; sixteen sail of different rigs, eleven of which, however, were two-decked ships of the largest size then known in naval warfare; and all of which were in that perfect order that an active and intelligent commander knows how to procure, even from the dilatory and indifferent. If Admiral Bluewater was conspicuous in maneuvering a fleet, and in rendering every vessel of a line that extended a league efficient, and that, too, in her right place, Sir Gervaise Oakes had the reputation of being one of the best seamen, in the ordinary sense of the word, in England. No vessel under his command ever had a lubberly look; and no ship that had any sailing in her failed to have it brought out of her. The Vice-admiral was familiar with that all-important fact—one that members equally of Congress and of Parliament are so apt to forget, or rather not to know at all—that the efficiency of a whole fleet, as a fleet, is necessarily brought down to the level of its worst ships. Of little avail is it, that four or five vessels of a squadron sail fast and work well, if the eight or ten that remain behave badly, and are dull. A separation of the vessels is the inevitable consequence, when the properties of all are thoroughly tried; and the division of a force is the first step towards its defeat; as its proper concentration is a leading condition of victory. As the poorer vessels cannot imitate the better, the good are compelled to regulate their movements by the bad; which is at once essentially bringing down the best ships of a fleet to the level of its worst; the proposition with which we commenced.

Sir Gervaise Oakes was so great a favorite that all he asked was usually

conceded to him. One of his conditions was, that his vessels should sail equally well; "If you give me fast ships," he said, "I can overtake the enemy; if dull, the enemy can overtake me; and I leave you to say which course will be most likely to bring on an action. At any rate, give me consorts; not one flyer and one drag, but vessels that can keep within hail of each other, without anchoring." The admiralty professed every desire to oblige the gallant commander; and, as he was resolved never to quit the *Plantagenet* until she was worn out, it was indispensably necessary to find as many fast vessels as possible, to keep her company. The result was literally a fleet of "horses," as Galleygo used to call it; and it was generally said in the service that "Oakes had a squadron of flyers, if not a flying-squadron."

Vessels like these just mentioned are usually symmetrical and graceful to the eye, as well as fast. This fact was apparent to Mildred, accustomed as she was to the sight of ships; and she ventured to express as much, after she and her companion had stood quite a minute on the cliff, gazing at the grand spectacle beneath them.

"Your vessels look even handsomer than common, Admiral Bluewater," she said, "though a ship, to me, is always an attractive sight."

"This is because they are handsomer than common, my pretty critic. Vice-admiral Oakes is an officer who will no more tolerate an ugly ship in his fleet, than a peer of the realm will marry any woman but one who is handsome; unless, indeed, she happen to be surpassingly rich."

"I have heard that men are accustomed to lose their hearts under such an influence," said Mildred, laughing, "but I did not know before, that they were ever frank enough to avow it!"

"The knowledge has been imparted by a prudent mother, I suppose," returned the Rear-admiral, in a musing manner; "I wish I stood sufficiently in the parental relation to you, my young friend, to venture to give a little advice, also Never, before, did I feel so strong a wish to warn a human being of a great danger that I fear is impending over her, could I presume to take the liberty."

"It is not a liberty, but a duty, to warn anyone of a danger that is known to ourselves, and not to the person who incurs the risk. At least so it appears in the eyes of a very young girl."

"Yes, if the danger was of falling from these cliffs, or of setting fire to a house, or of any other visible calamity. The case is different, when young ladies, and setting fire to the heart, are concerned."

"Certainly, I can perceive the distinction," answered Mildred, after a short pause; "and can understand that the same person who would not scruple to give the alarm against any physical danger, would hesitate even at hinting at one of a moral character. Nevertheless, if Admiral Bluewater thinks a simple girl, like me, of sufficient importance to take the trouble to interest himself in her welfare, I should hope he would not shrink from pointing out this danger. It is a terrible word to sleep on; and I confess, besides a little uneasiness, to a good deal of curiosity to know more."

"This is said, Mildred, because you are unaccustomed to the shocks which the tongue of rude man may give your sensitive feelings."

"Unaccustomed!" said Mildred, trembling so that the weakness was apparent to her companion. "Unaccustomed! Alas! Admiral Bluewater, can this be so, after what you have seen and heard!"

"Pardon me, dear child; nothing was farther from my thoughts, than to wish to revive those unpleasant recollections. If I thought I should be forgiven, I might venture, yet, to reveal my secret; for never before — though I cannot tell the reason of so sudden and so extraordinary an interest in one who is almost a stranger——"

"No, no—not a stranger, dear sir. After all that has passed to-day; after you have been admitted, though it were by accident, to one most sacred secret; after all that was said in the carriage, and the terrible scenes my beloved mother

went through in your presence so many years since, you can never be a stranger to *us*, whatever may be your own desire to fancy yourself one."

"Girl, you do not fascinate—you do not charm me, but you bind me to you in a way I did not think it in the power of any human being to subjugate my feelings!"

This was said with so much energy, that Mildred dropped the arm she held, and actually recoiled a step, if not in alarm, at least in surprise. But, on looking up into the face of her companion, and perceiving large tears actually glistening on his cheek, and seeing the hair that exposure and mental cares had whitened more than time, all her confidence returned, and she resumed the place she had abandoned, of her own accord, and as naturally as a daughter would have clung to the side of a father.

"I am sure, sir, my gratitude for this interest ought to be quite equal to the honor it does me," Mildred said, earnestly. "And now, Admiral Bluewater, do not hesitate to speak to me with the frankness that a parent might use. I will listen with the respect and deference of a daughter."

"Then do listen to what I have to say, and make no answer, if you find yourself wounded at the freedom I am taking. It would seem that there was but one object on which a man, old fellow or young fellow, can speak to a lovely young girl, when he gets her alone under the light of a fine moon; and that is love. Nay, start not again, my dear. for, if I am about to speak on so awkward a subject, it is not in my own behalf. I hardly know whether you will think it in behalf of anyone; as what I have to say is not an appeal to your affections, but a warning against bestowing them."

"A warning, Admiral Bluewater! Do you really think that can be necessary?"

"Nay, my child, that is best known to yourself. Of one thing I am certain; the young man I have in my eye affects to admire you, whether he does or not; and when young women are led to believe they are loved, it is a strong appeal to all their generous feelings to answer the passion, if not with equal warmth, at least with something very like it."

"Affects to admire, sir! And why should any one be at the pains of affecting feelings toward me that they do not actually entertain? I have neither rank, nor money, to bribe any one to be guilty of an hypocrisy so mean, and which, in my case, would be so motiveless."

"Yes, if it were motiveless to win the most beautiful creature in England! But, no matter. We will not stop to analyze motives, when facts are what we aim at. I should think there must be some passion in this youth's suit, and that will only make it so much the more dangerous to its object. At all events, I feel a deep conviction that he is altogether unworthy of you. This is a bold expression of opinion on an acquaintance of a day; but there are such reasons for it, that a man of my time of life, if unprejudiced, can scarcely be deceived."

"All this is very singular, sir, and I had almost used your own word of 'alarming,'" replied Mildred, slightly agitated by curiosity, but more amused. "I shall be as frank as yourself, and say that you judge the gentleman harshly. Mr. Rotherham may not have all the qualities that a clergyman ought to possess, but he is far from being a bad man. Good or bad, however, it is not probable that he will carry his transient partiality any farther than he has gone already."

"Mr. Rotherham! I have neither thought nor spoke of the pious vicar at all!"

Mildred was now sadly confused. Mr. Rotherham had made his proposals for her, only the day before, and he had been mildly but firmly refused. The recent occurrence was naturally uppermost in her mind; and the conjecture that her rejected suitor, under the influence of wine, might have communicated the state of his wishes, or what he fancied to be the state of his wishes, to her companion, was so very easy, that she had fallen into the error, almost without reflection.

"I beg pardon, sir; I really imagined—" the confused girl answered—"but, it was a natural mistake for me to suppose you

meant Mr. Rotherham, as he is the only one who has ever spoken to my mother on the subject of anything like a preference for me."

"I should have less fear of those who spoke to your mother, Mildred, than of those who spoke only to you. As I hate ambiguity, however, I will say, at once, that my allusion was to Mr. Wychecombe."

"Mr. Wychecombe, Admiral Bluewater!" and the veteran felt the arm that leaned on him tremble violently, a sad confirmation of even more than he apprehended, or he would not have been so abrupt. "Surely—surely—the warning you mean cannot—ought not to apply to a gentleman of Mr. Wychecombe's standing and character!"

"Such is the world, Miss Dutton, and we old seamen, in particular, get to know it, whether willingly or not. My sudden interest in you, the recollection of former, but painful scenes, and the events of the day, have made me watchful, and, you may add, bold; but I am resolved to speak, even at the risk of disobliging you forever; and, in speaking, I must say that I never met with a young man who has made so unfavorable an impression on me as this same Mr. Wychecombe."

Mildred, unconsciously to herself, withdrew her arm, and she felt astonished at her own levity, in so suddenly becoming sufficiently intimate with a stranger to permit him thus to disparage a confirmed friend.

"I am sorry, sir, that you entertain so indifferent an opinion of one who is, I believe, a general favorite, in this part of the country," she answered, with a coldness that rendered her manner very marked.

"I perceive I shall share the fate of all unwelcome counselors, but can only blame my own presumption. Mildred, we live in momentous times, and God knows what is to happen to myself in the next few months; but, so strong is the inexplicable interest that I feel in your welfare, that I shall venture still to offend. I like not this Mr. Wychecombe, who is so devout an admirer of yours—real or affected—and, as to the liking of dependents for the heir of a considerable estate, it is so much a matter of course, that I count it nothing."

"The heir of a considerable estate!" repeated Mildred, in a voice to which the natural sweetness returned, quietly resuming the arm she had so unceremoniously dropped, "surely, dear sir, you are not speaking of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, Sir Wycherly's nephew?"

"Of whom else should I speak? Has he not been your shadow the whole day?—so marked in his attentions, as scarce to deem it necessary to conceal his suit?"

"Has it really struck you thus, sir? I confess I did not so consider it. We are so much at home at the Hall, that we rather expect all of the family to be kind to us. But whether you are right in your conjecture, or not, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe can never be aught to me; and as a proof, Admiral Bluewater, that I take your warning, as it is meant, in kindness and sincerity, I will add, that he is not a very particular favorite."

"I rejoice to hear it! Now there is his namesake, our young lieutenant, as gallant and as noble a fellow as ever lived; would to Heaven he was not so wrapped up in his profession, as to be insensible to any beauties but those of a ship! Were you my own daughter, Mildred, I could give you to that lad, with as much freedom as I would give him my estate, were he my son."

Mildred smiled, and it was archly, though not without a shade of sorrow, too; but she had sufficient self-command to keep her feelings to herself, and too much maiden reserve not to shrink from betraying her weakness to one, who, after all, was little more than a stranger.

"I dare say, sir," she answered, with an equivocation which was perhaps venial, "that your knowledge of the world has judged both these gentlemen rightly. Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, notwithstanding all you heard from my poor father, is not likely to think seriously of me; and I will answer for my own feelings as regards him. I am, in no manner, a proper person to become Lady Wychecombe; and, I trust, I should have the prudence to de-

cline the honor, were it even offered me. Believe me, sir, my father would have held a different language to-night, had it not been for Sir Wycherly's wine, and the many loyal toasts that were drunk. He must be conscious, in his reflecting moments, that a child of his is unsuited to so high a station. Our prospects in life were once better than they are now, Admiral Bluewater; but they have never been such as to raise these high expectations in us."

"An officer's daughter may always claim to be a gentlewoman, my dear; and, as such, you might become the wife of a duke, did he love you. Since I find my warning unnecessary, however, we will change the discourse. Did not something extraordinary occur at the cliff, this morning, and in connection with this very Mr. Thomas Wychecombe? Sir Gervaise was my informant; but he did not relate the matter very clearly."

Mildred explained the mistake, and then gave a vivid description of the danger in which the young lieutenant had been placed, as well as of the manner in which he had extricated himself. She particularly dwelt on the extraordinary presence of mind and resolution by means of which he had saved his life, when the stone first gave way beneath his foot.

"All this is well, and what I should have expected from so active and energetic a youth," returned the Rear-admiral, a little gravely; "but, I confess I would rather it had not happened. Your inconsiderate and reckless young men, who risk their necks idly, in places of this sort, seldom have much in them after all. Had there been a motive, it would have altered the case."

"O! but there was a motive, sir; he was far from doing so silly a thing for nothing!"

"And what was the motive, pray? I can see no sufficient reason why a man of sense should trust his person over a cliff as menacing as this. One may approach it by moonlight; but in the day, I confess to you I should not fancy standing as near it as we do at this moment."

Mildred was much embarrassed for an answer. Her own heart told her Wycherly's motive, but that it would never do to avow to her companion, great as was the happiness she felt in avowing it to herself. Gladly would she have changed the discourse; but, as this could not be done, she yielded to her native integrity of character, and told the truth, as far as she told anything.

"The flowers that grow on the sunny side of these rocks, Admiral Bluewater, are singularly fragrant and beautiful," she said; "and hearing my mother and myself speaking of them, and how much the former delights in them, though they were so seldom to be had, he just ventured over the cliff—not here where it is so very perpendicular, but yonder, where one may cling to it, very well, with a little care; and it was in venturing a little—just a very little too far, he told me himself, sir, to-day, after dinner—that the stone broke, and the accident occurred. I do not think Mr. Wycherly Wychecombe in the least foolhardy, and not at all disposed to seek a silly admiration by a silly exploit."

"He has a most lovely and a most eloquent advocate," returned the Admiral, smiling, though the expression of his countenance was melancholy even to sadness; "and he is acquitted. I think few men of his years would hesitate about risking their necks for flowers so fragrant and beautiful, and so much coveted by *your* mother, Mildred."

"And he a sailor, sir, who thinks so little of standing on giddy places, and laughs at fears of this nature?"

"Quite true; though there are few cliffs on board ship. Ropes are our source of courage."

"So I should think, by what passed to-day," returned Mildred, laughing. "Mr. Wycherly called out for a rope, and we just threw him one, to help him out of his difficulty. The moment he got his rope, though it was only yonder small signal-halyards, he felt himself as secure as if he stood up here, on the height, with acres of level ground around him. I do not think he was frightened at any time; but when he got hold of that little rope he was fairly valiant!"

Mildred endeavored to laugh at her own history, by way of veiling her interest in the event; but her companion was too old, and too discerning, to be easily deceived. He continued silent, as he led her away from the cliff; and when he entered the cottage, Mildred saw, by the nearer light of the candles, that his countenance was still sad.

Admiral Bluewater remained half an hour longer in the cottage, when he tore himself away from a society which, for him, possessed a charm that he could not account for, nor yet scarcely estimate. It was past one when he bade Mrs. Dutton and her daughter adieu; promising, however, to see them again before the fleet sailed. Late as it was, the mother and Mildred felt no disposition to retire, after the exciting scenes they had gone through; but, feeling a calm on their spirit, succeeding the rude interruption produced by Dutton's brutality, they walked out on the cliff, to enjoy the cool air, and the bland scenery of the headland, at that witching hour.

"I should feel alarmed at this particularity of attention from most men, my child," observed the prudent mother, as they left the house; "but the years, and especially the character of Admiral Bluewater, are pledges that he meditates nothing foolish, nor wrong."

"His years would be sufficient, mother," cried Mildred, laughing, for her laugh came easily, since the opinion she had just before heard of Wycherly's merit, "leaving the character out of the question."

"For you, perhaps, Mildred, but not for himself. Men rarely seem to think themselves too old to win the young of our sex; and what they want in attraction, they generally endeavor to supply by flattery and artifice. But, I acquit our new friend of all that."

"Had he been my own father, dearest mother, his language, and the interest he took in me, could not have been more paternal. I have found it truly delightful to listen to such counsel from one of his sex; for, in general, they do not treat me in so sincere and fatherly a manner."

Mrs. Dutton's lip quivered, her eyelids trembled, too, and a couple of tears fell on her cheeks.

"It is new to you, Mildred, to listen to the language of disinterested affection and wisdom from one of his years and sex. I do not censure your listening with pleasure, but merely tell you to remember the proper reserve of your years and character. Hist! there are the sounds of his barge's oars."

Mildred listened, and the measured but sudden jerk of oars in the rullocks ascended on the still night air, as distinctly as they might have been heard in the boat.

At the next instant an eight-oared barge moved swiftly out from under the cliff, and glided steadily on toward a ship, that had one lantern suspended from the end of her gaff, another in her mizzen-top, and the small night-flag of a Rear-admiral fluttering at her mizzen-royal-masthead. The cutter lay nearest to the landing, and, as the barge approached her, the ladies heard the loud hail of "Boat ahoy!" The answer was also audible, though given in the mild gentleman-like voice of Bluewater himself. It was simply "Rear-admiral's flag." A death-like stillness succeeded this annunciation of the rank of the officer in the passing boat, interrupted only by the measured jerk of the oars. Once or twice, indeed, the keen hearing of Mildred made her fancy she heard the common dip of the eight oars, and the wash of the water, as they rose from the element, to gain a renewed purchase. As each vessel was approached, however, the hail and the answer were renewed, the quiet of midnight, in every instance, succeeding. At length the barge was seen shooting along on the quarter of the *Cæsar*, the Rear-admiral's own ship, and the last hail was given. This time, there was a slight stir in the vessel; and, soon after the sound of the oars ceased, the lanterns descended from the stations they had held since nightfall. Two or three other lanterns were still displayed at the gaffs of other vessels, the signs that their captains were not on board; though whether they were ashore, or visiting in the fleet, were facts best known to themselves. The

Plantagenet, however, had no light; it being known that Sir Gervaise did not intend to come off that night.

When all this was over, Mrs. Dutton and Mildred sought their pillows, after an exciting day, and, to them, one far more momentous than they were then aware of.

CHAPTER XI.

"When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet fooled with hope, men favor the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay;
To-morrow's falser than the former day."
—DRYDEN.

ALTHOUGH Admiral Bluewater devoted the minimum of time to sleep, he was not what the French term *matinal*. There is a period in the morning, on board of a ship of war—that of washing decks—which can best be compared to the discomfort of the American purification, ycleped "a house-cleaning." This occurs daily, about the rising of the sun; and no officer, whose rank raises him above mingling with the duty thinks, except on extraordinary occasions that may require his presence for other purposes, of intruding on its sacred mysteries. It is a rabid hour in a ship, and the wisest course, for all idlers, and all watch-officers who are not on duty, is to keep themselves under hatches, if their convenience will possibly allow it. He who wears a flag, however, is usually reposing in his cot, at this critical moment; or, if risen at all, he is going through similar daily ablutions of his own person.

Admiral Bluewater was in the act of opening his eyes, when the splash of the first bucket of water was heard on the deck of the *Cæsar*, and he lay in the species of enjoyment which is so peculiar to naval men, after they have risen to the station of commander: a sort of semi-trance, in which the mind summons all the ancient images, connected with squalls; reefing topsails in the rain; standing on the quarter of a yard, shouting, "Haul out to leeward;" peering over the weather hammock-cloths to eye the weather, with the sleet prickling the face like needles; and—washing decks! These dreamy images of the past, however, are summoned merely to increase the sense of present enjoyment. They are so many well-contrived foils, to give greater brilliancy to the diamonds of a comfortable cot, and the entire consciousness of being no longer exposed to untimely summons on deck.

Our Rear-admiral, nevertheless, was not a vulgar dreamer, on such occasions. He thought little of personal comforts at any time, unless indeed when personal discomforts obtruded themselves on his attention; he knew little or nothing of the table, whereas his friend was a knowing cook and in the days of probation had been a distinguished caterer; but he was addicted to a sort of dreaming of his own, even when the sun stood in the zenith, and he was walking the poop, in the midst of a circle of his officers. Still, he could not refrain from glancing back at the past, that morning, as plash after plash was heard, and recalling the time when *magna pars quorum* FUIT. At this delectable instant, the ruddy face of a "young gentleman" appeared in his stateroom door, and, first ascertaining that the eyes of his superior were actually open, the youngster said:

"A note from Sir Gervaise, Admiral Bluewater."

"Very well, sir," taking the note. "How's the wind, Lord Geoffrey?"

"An Irishman's hurricane, sir, right up and down. Our first says, sir, he never knew finer channel weather."

"Our first is a great astrologer. Is the fleet riding flood yet?"

"No, sir; it's slack-water; or rather, the ebb is just beginning to make."

"Go on deck, my lord, and see if the *Dover* has hove in any upon her larboard bower, so as to bring her more on our quarter."

"Aye, aye, sir," and this cadet of one of the most illustrious houses of England skipped up the ladder to ascertain this fact.

In the meanwhile, Bluewater stretched out an arm, drew a curtain from before his little window, fumbled for some time

among his clothes before he got his spectacles, and then opened the note. This early epistle was couched in the following words:

DEAR BLUE: I write this in a bed big enough to wear a ninety in. I've been athwartships half the night, without knowing it. Galleygo has just been in to report "our fleet" all well, and the ships riding flood. It seems there is a good lookout from the top of the house, where part of the roads is visible. Magrath, and the rest of them, have been at poor Sir Wycherly all night, I learn, but he remains down by the head, yet, I am afraid that the good old man will never be in trim again. I shall remain here until something is decided; and as we cannot expect our orders until next day after to-morrow, at the soonest, one might as well be here, as on board. Come ashore and breakfast with us; when we can consult about the propriety of remaining, or of abandoning the wreck. Adieu.

OAKES.

Rear-Admiral Bluewater.

P.S.—There was a little occurrence last night, connected with Sir Wycherly's will, that makes me particularly anxious to see you, as early as possible, this morning.

O.

Sir Gervaise, like a woman, had written his mind in his postscript. The scene of the previous night had forcibly presented itself to his recollection on awakening and, calling for his writing-desk, he had sent off this note, at the dawn of day, with the wish of having as many important witnesses as he could well obtain, at the interview he intended to demand at the earliest practicable hour.

"What the deuce can Oakes have to do with Sir Wycherly Wychecombe's will?" thought the Rear-admiral. "By the way, that puts me in mind of my own; and of my own recent determination. What are my poor £30,000 to a man with the fortune of Lord Bluewater. Having neither a wife nor child, brother nor sister of my own, I'll do what I please with my money. Oakes won't have it; besides he's got enough of his own, and to spare. An estate of £7,000 a year, besides heaps of prize-money funded. I dare say he has a good £12,000 a year, and nothing but a nephew to inherit it all. I am determined to do as I please with my money. I made every shilling of it, and I'll give it to whom I please."

The whole time Admiral Bluewater lay with his eyes shut, and with a tongue as motionless as if it couldn't stir. With all his *laissez aller* manner, however, he had the promptitude of a sailor, when his mind was made up to do a thing, though he always performed it in his own peculiar mode. To rise, dress, and prepare to quit his stateroom, occupied him but a short time; and he was seated before his own writing-desk, in the after-cabin, within twenty minutes after the thoughts just recorded had passed through his mind. His first act was to take a folded paper from a private drawer, and glance his eye carelessly over it. This was the will in favor of Lord Bluewater. It was expressed in very concise terms, filling only the first side of a page. This will he copied, *verbatim et literatim*, leaving blanks for the name of the legatee, and appointing Sir Gervaise Oakes his executor, as in the will already executed. When finished in this manner, he set about filling up the blanks. For a passing instant, he felt tempted to insert the name of the Pretender; but smiling at his own folly, he wrote that of "Mildred Dutton, daughter of Francis Dutton, a master in his Majesty's navy," in all the places that it was requisite so to do. Then he affixed the seal, and, folding all the upper part of the sheet over, so as to conceal the contents, he rang a little silver bell, which always stood at his elbow. The outer cabin door was opened by the sentry, who thrust his head in at the opening.

"I want one of the young gentlemen, sentry," said the Rear-admiral.

The door closed, and, in another minute, the smiling face of Lord Geoffrey was at the entrance of the after-cabin.

"Who's on deck, my lord," demanded Bluewater, "beside the watch?"

"No one, sir. All the idlers keep as

close as foxes, when the decks are getting it; and as for any of our snorers showing their faces before six bells, it's quite out of the question, sir."

"Some one must surely be stirring in the gunroom, by this time! Go and ask the chaplain and the captain of marines to do me the favor to step into the cabin — or the first lieutenant; or the master; or any of the idlers."

The midshipman was gone two or three minutes, when he returned with the purser and the chaplain.

"The first lieutenant is in the forehold, sir; all the marines have got their dead-lights still in, and the master is working up his log, the gunroom steward says. I hope these will do, sir; they are the greatest idlers in the ship, I believe."

Lord Geoffrey Cleveland was the second son of the third duke in the English Empire, and he knew it, as well as any one on board. Admiral Bluewater had no slavish respect for rank; nevertheless, like all men educated under an aristocratic system, he was influenced by the feeling to a degree of which he himself was far from being conscious. This young scion of nobility was not in the least favored in matters of duty, for this his own high spirit would have resented; but he dined in the cabin twice as often as any other midshipman on board, and had obtained for himself a sort of license for the tongue, that emboldened him to utter what passed for smart things in the cockpit and gunroom, and which, out of all doubt, were pert things everywhere. Neither the chaplain nor the purser took offense at his liberties on the present occasion; and, as for the Rear-admiral, he had not attended to what had been uttered. As soon, however, as he found others in his cabin, he motioned to them to approach his desk, and pointed to the paper, folded down as mentioned.

"Every prudent man," he said, "and especially every prudent sailor and soldier, in a time of war, ought to be provided with a will. This is mine, just drawn up by myself; and that instrument is an old one, which I now destroy in your presence. I acknowledge this to be my hand and seal," writing his name, and touching the seal with a finger as he spoke; "affixed to this my last will and testament. Will you have the kindness to act as witnesses?"

When the chaplain and purser had affixed their names, there still remained a place for a third signature. This, by a sign from his superior, the laughing midshipman filled with his own signature.

"I hope you've recollected, sir," cried the boy, with glee, as he took his seat to obey, "that the Bluewaters and Clevelands are related. I shall be grievously disappointed, when this will is proved, if my name be not found somewhere in it!"

"So shall I, too, my lord," dryly returned Bluewater; "for, I fully expect it will appear as a witness; a character that is at once fatal to all claims as a legatee."

"Well, sir, I suppose flag-officers can do pretty much as they please with their money, since they do pretty much as they please with the ships, and all in them. I must lean so much the harder on my two old aunts, as I appear to have laid myself directly athwart-hawse of fortune in this affair!"

"Gentlemen," said the Rear-admiral, with easy courtesy, "I regret it is not in my power to have your company at dinner, to-day, as I am summoned ashore by Sir Gervaise, and it is uncertain when I can get off again; but to-morrow I shall hope to enjoy that pleasure."

The officers bowed, expressed their acknowledgment, accepted the invitation, bowed once or twice more each, and left the cabin, with the exception of the midshipman.

"Well, sir," exclaimed Bluewater, a little surprised at finding he was not alone, after a minute of profound reverie; "to what request am I indebted still for the pleasure of your presence?"

"Why, sir, it's just forty miles to my father's house in Cornwall, and I know the whole family is there; so I just fancied, that by bending on two extra horses, a chaise might make the park gates in about five hours; and by getting under way on the return passage, to-morrow

about this time, the old *Cæsar* would never miss a crazy reefer, more or less."

"Very ingeniously put, young gentleman, and quite plausible. When I was of your age, I was four years once without seeing either father or mother."

"Yes, sir, but that was such a long time ago! Boys can't stand it half as well now, as they did then, as all old people say."

The Rear-admiral's lips moved slightly as if a smile struggled about his mouth; then his face suddenly lost the expression, in one approaching to sadness.

"You know, Geoffrey, I am not commander-in-chief. Sir Gervaise alone can give a furlough."

"Very true, sir; but whatever you ask of Sir Gervaise, he always does; more especially as concerns us of your flagship."

"Perhaps that is true. But, my boy, we live in serious times, and we may sail at an hour's notice. Are you ignorant that Prince Charles Edward has landed in Scotland, and that the Jacobites are up and doing? If the French back him, we may have our hands full, here in the channel."

"Then my dear mother must go without a kiss for the next twelvemonth!" cried the gallant boy, dashing a hand furtively across his eyes, in spite of his resolution. "The throne of old England must be upheld, even though not a mother nor a sister in the island see a midshipman in years!"

"Nobly said, Lord Geoffrey, and it shall be known at headquarters. Your family is whig; and you do well, at your time of life, to stick to the family politics."

"A small run on the shore, sir, would be a great pleasure, after six months at sea."

"You must ask Captain Stowel's leave for that. You know I never interfere with the duty of the ship."

"Yes, sir, but there are so many of us, and all have a hankering after *terra firma*. Might I just say, that I have your permission to ask Captain Stowel to let me have a run on the cliffs?"

"You may do that, my lord, if you wish it; but Stowel knows that he can do as he pleases."

"He would be a queer captain of a man-of-war if he didn't, sir! Thank you, Admiral Bluewater, I will write to my mother, and I know she'll be satisfied with the reason I shall give her, for not coming to see her. Good morning, sir."

"Good morning,"—then, when the boy's hand was on the lock of the cabin-door—"my lord?"

"Did you wish to say anything more, sir?"

"When you write, remember me kindly to the duchess. We were intimate, when young people; and, I might say, loved each other."

The midshipman promised to do as desired; then the Rear-admiral was left alone. He walked the cabin for half an hour, musing on what he had done in relation to his property, and on what he ought to do in relation to the Pretender; when he suddenly summoned his cockswain, gave a few directions, and sent an order on deck to have his barge manned. The customary reports went their usual rounds, and reached the cabin in about three minutes more; Lord Geoffrey bringing them down again.

"The barge is manned, sir," said the lad, standing near the cabin-door, rigged out in the neat, go-ashore clothes of a midshipman.

"Have you seen Captain Stowel, my lord?" demanded the Rear-admiral.

"I have, sir; and he has given me permission to drift along-shore, until sunset; to be off with the evening gun of the Vice-admiral."

"Then do me the favor to take a seat in my barge, if you are quite ready."

This offer was accepted, and in a few minutes all the ceremonies of the deck had been observed, and the Rear-admiral was seated in his barge. It was now so late that etiquette had fair play, and no point was omitted on the occasion. The captain was on deck, in person, as well as gun-room officers enough to represent their body; the guard was paraded under its officers; the drums rolled; the boatswain piped six side boys over, and Lord Geoffrey

skipped down first into the boat, remaining respectfully standing, until his superior was seated. All these punctilios observed, the boat was shoved off from the vessel's side, the eight oars dropped, as one, and the party moved toward the shore. Every cutter, barge, yawl, or launch that was met, and which did not contain an officer of rank itself, tossed its oars, as this barge, with the Rear-admiral's flag fluttering in its bow, passed while the others lay on theirs, the gentlemen saluting with their hats. In this manner the barge passed the fleet, and approached the shore. At the landing, a little quay formed by a low flat rock, there was a general movement, as the Rear-admiral's flag was seen to draw near; and even the boats of captains were shoved aside, to give the naval *pas*. As soon, however, as the foot of Bluewater touched the rock, the little flag was struck; and, a minute latter, a cutter, with only a lieutenant in her, coming in, that officer ordered the barge to make way for him, with an air of high and undisputed authority.

Perhaps there was not a man in the British marine, to whom the etiquette of the service gave less concern, than to Bluewater. In this respect, he was the very reverse of his friend; for Sir Gervaise was a punctilious observer, and a rigid enforcer of all the prescribed ceremonials. This was by no means the only professional point on which these two distinguished officers differed. It has already been mentioned that the Rear-admiral was the best tactician in England, while the Vice-admiral was merely respectable in that branch of his duty. On the other hand, Sir Gervaise was deemed the best practical seaman afloat, so far as a single ship was concerned, while Bluewater had no particular reputation in that way. Then, as to discipline, the same distinction existed. The commander-in-chief was a little *martinet*, exacting compliance with the most minute regulations; while his friend, even when a captain, had thrown the police duty of his ship very much on what is called the executive officer, or the first lieutenant; leaving to that important functionary the duty of devising, as well as of executing, the system by which order and cleanliness were maintained in the vessel. Nevertheless, Bluewater had his merit even in this particular feature of the profession. He had made the best captain of the fleet to his friend that had ever been met with. The office, which, in some measure, corresponds to that of an adjutant general on shore, was suited to his generalizing and philosophical turn of mind; and he had brought all its duties within the circle and control of clear and simple principles, which rendered them pleasant and easy.

Then, too, whenever he commanded in chief, as frequently happened, for a week or two at a time, Sir Gervaise being absent, it was remarked that the common service of the fleet went on like clockwork; his mind seeming to embrace generals, when it refused to descend to details. In consequence of these personal peculiarities, the captains often observed that Bluewater ought to have been the senior, and Oakes the junior; and then, their joint commands would have produced perfection; but these criticisms must be set down, in a great measure, to the natural propensity to find fault, and an inherent desire in men, even when things are perfectly well in themselves, to prove their own superiority, by pointing out modes and means by which they might be made much better. Had the service been on land, this opinion might possibly have had more practical truth in it; but the impetuosity and daring of Sir Gervaise were not bad substitutes for tactics, in the straightforward combats of ships. To resume the narrative.

When Bluewater landed, he returned the profound and general salute of all on or near the rock, by a sweeping, but courteous bow, which was nevertheless given in a vacant, slovenly manner; and immediately began to ascend the ravine. He had actually reached the grassy acclivity above, before he was at all aware of any person's being near him. Turning, he perceived that the midshipman was at his heels, respect alone preventing one of the latter's active limbs and years from skipping past his superior on the ascent.

The Admiral recollected how little there was to amuse one of the boy's habits in a place like Wychecombe, and he good-naturedly determined to take him along with himself.

"You are little likely to find any diversion here, Lord Geoffrey," he said; "if you will accept of the society of a dull old fellow, like myself, you shall see all I see, be it more or less."

"I've shipped for the cruise, sir, and am ready and happy, too, to follow your motions, with or without signals," returned the laughing youngster. "I suppose Wychecombe is about as good as Portsmouth, or Plymouth; and I'm sure these green fields are handsomer than the streets of any dirty town I ever entered."

"Aye, green fields are, indeed, pleasant to the eyes of us sailors, who see nothing but water, for months at a time. Turn to the right, if you please, my lord; I wish to call at yonder signal-station, on my way to the Hall."

The boy, as is not usual with lads of his age, inclined in "the way he was told to go," and in a few minutes both stood on the headland. As it would not have done for the master to be absent from his staff during the day, with a fleet in the roads, Dutton was already at his post, cleanly dressed as usual, but trembling again with the effect of last night's debauch on his nerves. He arose, with great deference of manner, to receive the Rear-admiral, and not without many misgivings of conscience; for, while memory furnished a tolerable outline of what had occurred in the interview between himself and his wife and daughter, wine had lost its influence, and no longer helped to sustain his self-command. He was much relieved, however, by the discreet manner in which he was met by Bluewater.

"How is Sir Wycherly?" inquired the Admiral, saluting the master, as if nothing had happened; "a note from Sir Gervaise, written about daybreak, tells me he was not then essentially better."

"I wish it were in my power to give you any good news, sir. He must be conscious, notwithstanding; for Dick, his groom, has ridden over with a note from Mr. Rotherham, to say that the excellent old Baronet particularly desires to see my wife and daughter; and that the coach will be here to take them over in a few minutes. If you are bound to the Hall, this morning, sir, I'm certain the ladies would be delighted to give you a seat."

"Then I will profit by their kindness," returned Bluewater, seating himself on the bench at the foot of the staff; "more especially, if you think they will excuse my adding Lord Geoffrey Cleveland, one of Stowel's midshipmen, to the party. He has entered, to follow my motions, with or without signals."

Dutton uncovered again, and bowed profoundly, at this announcement of the lad's name and rank; the boy himself, taking the salute in an off-hand and indifferent way, like one already wearied with vulgar adulation, while he gazed about him, with some curiosity, at the headland and flag-staff.

"This is a good lookout, sir," observed the midshipman; "and one that is somewhat loftier than our cross-trees. A pair of sharp eyes might see everything that passes within twenty miles; and, as a proof of it, I shall be the first to sing out, 'Sail, ho!'"

"Where-away, my young lord?" said Dutton, fidgeting, as if he had neglected his duty, in the presence of a superior; "I'm sure your lordship can see nothing but the fleet at anchor, and a few boats passing between the different ships and the landing!"

"Where-away, sure enough, youngster?" added the Admiral. "I see some gulls glancing along the surface of the water, a mile or two outside the ships, but nothing like a sail."

The boy caught up Dutton's glass, which lay on the seat, and in a minute he had it leveled at the expanse of water. It was some little time, and not without much sighting along the barrel of the instrument, that he got it to suit himself.

"Well, Master Sharp-eyes," said Bluewater, dryly, "is it a Frenchman, or a Spaniard?"

"Hold on, a moment, sir, until I can

get this awkward glass to bear on it. Aye—now I have her; she's but a speck, at the best—royals and head of topgallant-sails—no, sir, by George, it's our own cutter, the *Active*, with her square-sail set, and the heads of her lower sails just rising. I know her by the way she carries her gaff."

"The *Active!* that betokens news," observed Bluewater, thoughtfully; for the march of events, at that moment, must necessarily bring on a crisis in his own career. "Sir Gervaise sent her to look into Cherbourg."

"Yes, sir, we all know that; and there she comes to tell us, I hope, that Monsieur de Vervillin has at last made up his mind to come out and face us, like a man. Will you look at the sail, sir?"

Bluewater took the glass, and sweeping the horizon, he soon caught a view of his object. A short survey sufficed, for one so experienced, and he handed the glass back to the boy.

"You have quick eyes, sir," he said, as he did so: "that is a cutter, certainly, standing in for the roads, and I believe you may be right in taking her for the *Active*."

"'Tis a long way to know so small a craft!" observed Dutton, who also took his look at the stranger.

"Very true, sir," answered the boy; "but one ought to tell a friend as far as he can see him. The *Active* carries a longer and a lower gaff than any other cutter in the navy, which is the way we all tell her from the *Gnat*, the cutter we have with us."

"I am glad to find your lordship is so close an observer," returned the complaisant Dutton; "a certain sign, my lord. that your lordship will make a good sailor in time."

"Geoffrey is a good sailor, already," observed the Admiral, who knew that the youngster was never better pleased than when he dropped the distance of using his title, and spoke to, or of him, as of a connection; which, in truth, he was. "He has now been with me four years, having joined when he was only twelve. Two more years will make an officer of him."

"Yes, sir," said Dutton, bowing first to one, and then to the other. "Yes, sir; his lordship may well look forward to that, with his particular merit, your esteemed favor, and his own great name. Ah! sir, they've caught a sight of the stranger in the fleet, and bunting is at work, already."

In anchoring his ships, Admiral Bluewater had kept them as close together as the fog rendered safe; for one of the great difficulties of a naval commander is to retain his vessels in compact order, in thick or heavy weather. Orders had been given, however, for a sloop and a frigate to weigh, and stretch out into the offing a league or two, as soon as the fog left them, the preceding day, in order to sweep as wide a reach of the horizon as was convenient.

In order to maintain their ground in a light wind, and with a strong tide running, these two cruisers had achored; one, at a distance of a league from the fleet, and the other, a mile or two farther outside, though more to the eastward. The sloop lay nearest to the stranger, and signals were flying at her main-royal-masthead, which the frigate was repeating, and transmitting to the flag-ship of the commander-in-chief. Bluewater was so familiar with all the ordinary signals, that it was seldom he had recourse to his book for the explanations; and, in the present instance, he saw at once that it was the *Active's* number that was shown. Other signals, however, followed, which it surpassed the Rear-admiral's knowledge to read without assistance; from all which he was satisfied that the stranger brought intelligence of importance, and which could only be understood by referring to the private signal-book.

While these facts were in the course of occurrence, the coach arrived to convey Mrs. Dutton and Mildred to the Hall. Bluewater now presented himself to the ladies, and was received as kindly as they had separated from him a few hours before; nor were the latter displeased at hearing he was to be their companion back to the dwelling of Sir Wycherly.

"I fear this summons bodes evil tid-

ings," said Mrs. Dutton; "he would hardly think of desiring to see us, unless something quite serious were on his mind; and the messenger said he was no better."

"We shall learn all, my dear lady, when we reach the Hall," returned Bluewater; "and the sooner we reach it, the sooner our doubts will be removod. Before we enter the carriage, let me make you acquainted with my young friend, Lord Geoffrey Cleveland, whom I have presumed to invite to be of the party."

The handsome young midshipman was well received, though Mrs. Dutton had been too much accustomed, in early life, to see people of condition, to betray the same deference as her husband for the boy's rank. The ladies occupied, as usual, the hind seat of the coach, leaving that in front to their male companions. The arrangement accidentally brought Mildred and the midshipman opposite each other; a circumstance that soon attracted the attention of the Admiral, in a way that was a little odd, if not remarkable. There is a charm in youth, that no other period of life possesses; infancy, with its helpless beauty, scarcely seizing upon the imagination and senses with an equal force. Both the young persons in question possessed this advantage in a high degree; and had there been no other peculiarity, the sight might readily have proved pleasing to one of Bluewater's benevolence and truth of feeling. The boy was turned of sixteen; an age in England when youth does not yet put on the appearance of manhood; and he retained all the evidences of a gay, generous boyhood, rendered a little *piquant* by the dash of archness, roguery, and fun, that a man-of-war is tolerably certain to impart to a lad of spirit.

Nevertheless, his countenance retained an expression of ingenuousness and of sensitive feeling that was singularly striking in one of his sex, and which, in spite of her beauty of feature, hair and complexion, formed the strongest attraction in the loveliness of Mildred; that expression which had so much struck and charmed Bluewater—haunted him, we might add—since the previous day, by appearing so familiar, even while so extraordinary, and for which he had been unable to recollect a counterpart. As she now sat, face to face with Lord Geoffrey, to his great surprise, the Rear-admiral found much of the same character of this very expression in the handsome boy, as in the lovely girl. It is true, the look of ingenuousness and of sensitive feeling was far less marked in young Cleveland than in Mildred, and there was little general resemblance of feature or countenance between the two; still, the first was to be found in both, and so distinctly as to be easily traced, when placed in so close contact. Geoffrey Cleveland had the reputation of being like his mother; and, furnished with this clew, the fact suddenly flashed on Bluewater's mind, that the being whom Mildred so nearly and strikingly resembled was a deceased sister of the duchess, and a beloved cousin of his own. Miss Hedworth, the young lady in question, had long been dead; but all who had known her retained the most pleasing impressions equally of her charms of person and of mind.

Between her and Bluewater there had existed a tender friendship, in which, however, no shade of passion had mingled; a circumstance that was in part owing to the difference in their years, Captain Bluewater having been nearly twice his young relative's age; and in part, probably, to the invincible manner in which the latter seemed wedded to his profession and his ship. Agnes Hedworth, notwithstanding, had been very dear to our sailor from a variety of causes—far more so than her sister, the duchess, though she was a favorite—and the Rear-admiral, when his mind glanced rapidly through the chain of association that traced the accidental resemblance of Mildred to the esteemed object, had a sincere delight in finding he had thus been unconsciously attracted by one whose every look and smile now forcibly reminded him of the countenance of a being whom, in her day, he had thought so near perfection. This delight, however, was blended with sadness, on various accounts; and the short excursion proved to be so melancholy, that no one was sorry when it terminated.

CHAPTER XII.

"*Nat.*—Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly varied, like a scholar, at the least. But, sir, I assure ye, it was a buck of the first head

"*Hol.*—Sir Nathaniel, *haud credo.*

'*Dull.*—'Twas not a *haud credo*, 'twas a pricket.'

—LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

EVERY appearance of the jolly negligence which had been so characteristic of life at Wychecombe Hall had vanished, when the old coach drew up in the court, to permit the party it had brought from the station to alight. As no one was expected but Mrs. Dutton and her daughter, not even a footman appeared to open the door of the carriage; the vulgar-minded usually revenging their own homage to the powerful, by manifesting as many slights as possible to the weak. Galleygo let the new-comers out, and, consequently, he was the first person of whom inquiries were made, as to the state of things in the house.

"Well," said Admiral Bluewater, looking earnestly at the steward; "how is Sir Wycherly, and what is the news?"

"Sir Wycherly is still on the Doctor's list, your honor; and I expects his case is set down as a hard 'un. We's as well as can be expected, and altogether in good heart. Sir Jarvy turned out with the sun, thof he didn't turn in till the middle-watch was half gone—or two bells, as they call 'em aboard this house—four bells, as we should say in the old *Planter;* and chickens, I hears, has riz, a shillin' a head, since our first boat landed."

"It's a melancholy business, Mrs. Dutton; I fear there can be little hope."

"Yes, it's all that, Admiral Blue," continued Galleygo, following the party into the house, no one but himself hearing a word he uttered, "and 'twill be worse, afore it's any better. They tell me potatoes has taken a start, too; and, as all the b'ys of all the young gentlemen in the fleet is out, like so many wild locusts of Hegypt, I expects nothing better than as our mess will fare as bad as sogers on a retreat."

In the hall, Tom Wychecombe, and his namesake, the lieutenant, met the party. From the formal despondency of the first, everything they apprehended was confirmed. The last, however, was more cheerful, and not altogether without hope; as he did not hesitate openly to avow.

"For myself, I confess I think Sir Wycherly much better," he said; "although the opinion is not sanctioned by that of the medical men. His desiring to see these ladies is favorable; and then cheering news for him has been brought back, already, by the messenger sent only eight hours since, for his kinsman, Sir Reginald Wychecombe. He has sensibly revived since that report was brought in."

"Ah! my dear namesake," rejoined Tom, shaking his head mournfully; "you cannot know my beloved uncle's constitution and feelings as well as I! Rely on it, the medical men are right; and your hopes deceive you. The sending for Mrs. Dutton and Miss Mildred, both of whom my honored uncle respects and esteems, looks more like leave-taking than anything else; and, as to Sir Reginald Wychecombe — though a relative, beyond a question — I think there has been some mistake in sending for him; since he is barely an acquaintance of the elder branch of the family, and he is of the half-blood."

"Half what, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe?" demanded the Vice-admiral so suddenly behind the speaker, as to cause all to start; Sir Gervaise having hastened to meet the ladies and his friend, as soon as he knew of their arrival. "I ask pardon, sir, for my abrupt inquiry; but, as I was the means of sending for Sir Reginald Wychecombe, I feel an interest in knowing his exact relationship to my host?"

Tom started, and even paled, at this sudden question; then the color rushed into his temples; he became calmer, and replied:

"Half-blood, Sir Gervaise," he said, steadily. "This is an affinity that puts a person altogether out of the line of succession; and, of course, removes any necessity, or wish, to see Sir Reginald."

"Half-blood—hey, Atwood?" muttered the Vice-admiral, turning away toward his secretary, who had followed him down-

stairs. "This may be the solution, after all! Do you happen to know what half-blood means? It cannot signify that Sir Reginald comes from one of those who have no father—all their ancestry consisting only of a mother?"

"I should think not, Sir Gervaise; in that case, Sir Reginald would scarcely be considered of so honorable a lineage as he appears to be. I have not the smallest idea, sir, what half-blood means; and, perhaps, it may not be amiss to inquire of the medical gentlemen. Magrath is upstairs; possibly he can tell us."

"I rather think it has something to do with the law. If this out-of-the-way place, now, could furnish even a lubberly attorney, we might learn all about it. Harkee, Atwood; you must stand by to make Sir Wycherly's will, if he says any more about it—have you got the heading all written out, as I desired?"

"It is quite ready, Sir Gervaise; beginning, as usual, 'In the name of God, Amen.' I have even ventured so far as to describe the testator's style and residence, etc., etc., 'I, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, Bart., of Wychecombe Hall, Devon, do make and declare this to be my last will and testament, etc., etc.' Nothing is wanting but the devises, as the lawyers call them. I can manage a will well enough, Sir Gervaise, I believe. One of mine has been in the courts, now, these five years, and they tell me it sticks there as well as if it had been drawn in the Middle Temple."

"Aye, I know your skill. Still, there can be no harm in just asking Magrath; though I think it must be law after all! Run up and ask him, Atwood, and bring me the answer in the drawing-room, where I see Bluewater has gone with his convoy; and, harkee—tell the surgeons to let us know the instant the patient says anything about his temporal affairs. The twenty thousand in the funds are his, to do what he pleases with; let the land be tied up as it may."

While this "aside" was going on in the hall, Bluewater and the rest of the party had entered a small parlor, that was in constant use, still conversing of the state of Sir Wycherly. As all of them but the two young men were ignorant of the nature of the message to Sir Reginald Wychcombe, and of the intelligence in connection with that gentleman, which had just been received, Mrs. Dutton ventured to ask an explanation, which was given by Wycherly, with a readiness that proved he felt no apprehensions on the subject.

"Sir Wycherly desired to see his distant relative, Sir Reginald," said the lieutenant; "and the messenger who was sent to request his attendance fortunately learned from a post-boy, that the Hertfordshire Baronet, in common with many other gentlemen, is traveling in the West, just at this moment; and that he slept, last night, at a house only twenty miles distant. The express reached him several hours since, and an answer has been received, informing us that we may expect to see him in an hour or two."

Thus much was related by Wycherly; but we may add, that Sir Reginald Wychecombe was a Catholic, as it was then usual to term the Romanists, and in secret, a Jacobite — and, in common with many of that religious persuasion, he was down in the West, to see if a rising could not be organized in that part of the kingdom, as a diversion to any attempt to repel the young Pretender in the North. As the utmost caution was used by the conspirators, this fact was not even suspected by any who were not in the secret of the whole proceeding. Understanding that his relation was an inefficient old man, Sir Reginald, himself an active and sagacious intriguer, had approached thus near to the old paternal residence of his family, in order to ascertain if his own name and descent might not aid him in obtaining levies among the ancient tenantry of the estate. That day he had actually intended to appear at Wychecombe, disguised, and under an assumed name. He proposed venturing on this step, because circumstances put it in his power to give what he thought would be received as a sufficient excuse, should his conduct excite comment.

Sir Reginald Wychecombe was a singular, but by no means an unnatural com-

pound of management and integrity. His position as a Papist had disposed him to intrigue, while his position as one proscribed by religious hostility had disposed him to be a Papist. Thousands are made men of activity, and even of importance, by persecution and proscription, who would pass through life quietly and unnoticed, if the meddling hand of human forethought did not force them into situations that awaken their hostility and quicken their powers. This gentleman was a firm believer in all the traditions of his church, though his learning extended little beyond his missal—and he put the most implicit reliance on the absurd, because improbable fiction of the Nag's Head consecration, without having even deemed it necessary to look into a particle of that testimony by which alone such a controversy could be decided. In a word, he was an instance of what religious intolerance has ever done, and will probably forever continue to do, with so wayward a being as man.

Apart from this weakness, Sir Reginald Wychecombe had both a shrewd and an inquiring mind. His religion he left very much to the priests—but of his temporal affairs he assumed a careful and prudent supervision. He was much richer than the head of the family; but, while he had no meannesses connected with money, he had no objection to be the possessor of the old family estates. Of his old relation to the head of this family he was perfectly aware, and the circumstance of the half-blood, with all its legal consequences, was no secret to him. Sir Reginald Wychecombe was not a man to be so situated, without having recourse to all proper means, in order, as it has become the fashion of the day to express it, "to define his position." By means of a shrewd attorney, if not of his own religious, at least of his own political opinions, he had ascertained the fact, and this from the mouth of Martha herself, that Baron Wychecombe had never married; and that, consequently, Tom and his brothers were no more heirs-at-law to the Wychecombe estate, then he was in his own person.

He fully understood, too, that there was no heir-at-law; and that the lands must escheat, unless the present owner made a will; and to this last act, his precise information told him that Sir Wycherly had an unconquerable reluctance. Under such circumstances, it is not at all surprising, that when the Hertfordshire Baronet was thus unexpectedly summoned to the bedside of his distant kinsman, he inferred that his own claims were at length to be tardily acknowledged, and that he was about to be put in possession of the estates of his legitimate ancestors. It is still less wonderful, that, believing this, he promptly promised to lose no time in obeying the summons, determining momentarily to forget his political, in order to look a little after his personal interests.

The reader will understand, of course, that all these details were unknown to the inmates of the Hall, beyond the fact of the expected arrival of Sir Reginald Wychecombe, and that of the circumstance of the half-blood, which, in its true bearing, was known alone to Tom. Their thoughts were directed toward the situation of their host, and little was said or done that had not his immediate condition for the object. It being understood, however, that the surgeons kept the sick-chamber closed against all visitors, a silent and melancholy breakfast was taken by the whole party, in waiting for the moment when they might be admitted. When this cheerless meal was ended, Sir Gervaise desired Bluewater to follow him to his room, whither he led the way in person.

"It is possible, certainly, that Vervillin is out," commenced the Vice-admiral, when they were alone; "but we shall know more about it when the cutter gets in and reports. You saw nothing but her number, I think you told me?"

"She was at work with private signals, when I left the headland; of course I was unable to read them without the book."

"That Vervillin is a good fellow," returned Sir Gervaise, rubbing his hands—a way he had when much pleased—"and has stuff in him. He has thirteen two-

decked ships, Dick, and that will be one apiece for our captains, and a spare one for each of our flags. I believe there is no three-decker in that squadron?"

"There you've made a small mistake, Sir Gervaise, as the Comte de Vervillin had his flag in the largest three-decker in France; *Le Bourbon*, 120. The rest of his ships are like our own, though much fuller manned."

"Never mind, Blue—never mind; we'll put two on the *Bourbon*, and try to make our frigates of use. Besides, you have a knack at keeping the fleet so compact, that it is nearly a single battery."

"May I venture to ask, then, if it is your intention to go out, should the news by the *Active* prove to be what you anticipate?"

Sir Gervaise cast a quick, distrustful glance at the other, anxious to read the motive for the question, at the same time that he did not wish to betray his own feelings; then he appeared to meditate on the answer.

"It is not quite agreeable to lie here, chafing our cables, with a French squadron roving the channel," he said; "but I rather think it's my duty to wait for orders from the Admiralty, under present circumstances."

"Do you expect my lords will send you through the Straits of Dover to blockade the Frith?"

"If they do, Bluewater, I shall hope for your company. I trust a night's rest has given you different views of what ought to be a seaman's duty, when his country is at open war with her ancient and most powerful enemies."

"It is the prerogative of the crown to declare war, Oakes. No one but a lawful sovereign can make a lawful war."

"Aye, here comes your cursed distinctions about *de jure* and *de facto*, again. By the way, Dick, you are something of a scholar—can you tell me what is understood by calling a man *nullus?*"

Admiral Bluewater, who had taken his usual lolling attitude in the most comfortable chair he could find, while his more mercurial friend kept pacing the room, now raised his head in surprise, following the quick motions of the other with his eyes, as if he doubted whether he had rightly heard the question.

"It's plain English, is it not?—or plain Latin, if you will; what is meant by calling a man *nullus?*" repeated Sir Gervaise, observing the other's manner.

"The Latin is plain enough, certainly," returned Bluewater, smiling; "you surely do not mean *nullus, nulla, nullum?*"

"Exactly that—you've hit it to a gender. *Nullus, nulla, nullum.* No man, no woman, no thing. Masculine, feminine, neuter."

"I never heard the saying. If ever used, it must be some silly play on sounds, and mean a numskull—or, perhaps, a fling at a fellow's position, by saying he is a 'nobody.' Who the deuce has been calling another a *nullus*, in the presence of the commander-in-chief of the southern squadron?"

"Sir Wycherly Wychecombe—our unfortunate host, here; the poor man who is on his death-bed on this very floor."

Again Bluewater raised his head, and once more his eye sought the face of his friend. Sir Gervaise had now stopped short, with his hands crossed behind his back, looking intently at the other, in expectation of the answer.

"I thought it might be some difficulty from the fleet—some silly fellow complaining of another still more silly for using such a word. Sir Wycherly! The poor man's mind must have failed him."

"I rather think not; if it has, there is 'method in his madness,' for he persevered most surprisingly in the use of the term. His nephew, Tom Wychecombe the presumptive heir, he insists on it, is a *nullus;* while this Sir Reginald, who is expected to arrive every instant, he says, is only half—or half-blood, as it has since been explained to us."

"I am afraid this nephew will prove to be anything but *nullus*, when he succeeds to the estate and title," answered Bluewater, gravely. "A more sinister-looking scoundrel I never laid eyes on."

"That is just my way of thinking; and not in the least like the family."

"This matter of likenesses is not easily

explained, Oakes. We see parents and children without any visible resemblance to each other; and then we find startling likenesses between utter strangers."

"Bachelors' children may be in that predicament, certainly; but I should think few others. I never yet studied a child, that I did not find some resemblance to both parents; covert and only transitory, perhaps; but a likeness so distinct as to establish the relationship. What an accursed chance it is, that our noble young lieutenant should have no claim on this old Baronet—while this d——d *nullus* is both heir-at-law and heir of entail! I never took half as much interest in any other man's estate, as I take in the succession to this of our poor host!"

"There you are mistaken, Oakes; you took more in mine; for, when I made a will in your own favor, and gave it to you to read, you tore it in two, and threw it overboard, with your own hand."

"Aye, that was an act of lawful authority. As your superior, I countermanded that will! I hope you've made another, and given your money, as I told you, to your cousin, the viscount."

"I did, but that will has shared the fate of the first. It appearing to me that we are touching on serious times, and Bluewater being rich already, I destroyed the devise in his favor, and made a new one, this very morning. As you are my executor, as usual, it may be well to let you know it."

"Dick, you have not been mad enough to cut off the head of your own family—your own flesh and blood, as it might be—to leave the few thousands you own to this mad adventurer in Scotland!"

Bluewater smiled at this evidence of the familiarity of his friend with his own way of thinking and feeling; and, for a single instant, he regretted that he had not put his first intention in force, in order that the conformity of views might have been still more perfect; but putting a hand in his pocket he drew out the document itself, and leaning forward, gave it carelessly to Sir Gervaise.

"There is the will; and by looking it over, you will know what I've done," he said. "I wish you would keep it; for, if 'Misery makes us acquainted with strange bed-fellows,' revolutions reduce us often to strange plights, and the paper will be safer with you than with me. Of course you will keep my secret until the proper time to reveal it shall arrive."

The Vice-admiral, who knew he had no interest in his friend's disposition of his property, took the will, with a good deal of curiosity to ascertain its provisions. So short a testament was soon read; and his eye rested intently on the paper until it had taken in the last word. Then his hand dropped, and he regarded Bluewater with a surprise he neither affected, nor wished to conceal. He did not doubt his friend's sanity, but he greatly questioned his discretion.

"This is a very simple, but a very ingenious arrangement to disturb the order of society," he said; "and to convert a very modest and unpretending, though lovely girl, into a forward and airs-taking old woman! What is this Mildred Dutton to you, that you should bequeath to her £30,000?"

"She is one of the meekest, most ingenuous, purest, and loveliest of her meek, ingenuous, pure, and lovely sex, crushed to the earth by the curse of a brutal, drunken father; and I am resolute to see that this world, for once, affords some compensation for its own miseries."

"Never doubt that, Richard Bluewater; never doubt that. So certain is vice, or crime to bring its own punishment in this life, that any one may well question if any other hell is needed. And, depend on it, your meek, modest ingenuousness, in its turn, will not go unrewarded."

"Quite true, so far as the spirit is concerned; but I mean to provide a little for the comfort of the body. You remember Agnes Hedworth, I take it for granted."

"Remember her!—out of all question. Had the war left me leisure for making love, she was the only woman I ever knew who could have brought me to her feet; I mean as a dog, Dick."

"Do you see any resemblance between her and this Mildred Dutton? It is in the expression rather than in the features; but it is the expression which alone denotes the character."

"By George, you're right, Bluewater; and this relieves me from some embarrassment I've felt about that very expression of which you speak. She is like poor Agnes, who became a saint earlier than any of us could have wished. Living or dead, Agnes Hedworth must be an angel! You were fonder of her than of any other woman, I believe. At one time, I thought you might propose for her hand."

"It was not that sort of affection, and you could not have known her private history, or you would not have fancied this. I was so situated in the way of relatives, that Agnes, though only the child of a cousin-german, was the nearest youthful female relative I had on earth; and I regarded her more as a sister than as a creature who could ever become my wife. She was sixteen years my junior; and by the time she was old enough to marry, I was accustomed to think of her only as one destined to fill another station. The same feeling existed as to her sister, the duchess, though in a greatly lessened degree."

"Poor, sweet Agnes! and it is on account of this accidental resemblance, that you have determined to make the daughter of a drunken sailing-master your heiress?"

"Not altogether so; the will was drawn before I was conscious that the likeness existed. Still, it has probably, unknown to myself, greatly disposed me to view her with favor. But, Gervaise, Agnes herself was not fairer in person, or more lovely in mind, than this very Mildred Dutton."

"Well, you have not been accustomed to regard her as a sister! and she has become marriageable, without there having been any opportunity for your regarding her as so peculiarly sacred, Dick!" returned Sir Gervaise, half suppressing a smile as he threw a quiet glance at his friend.

"You know this to be idle, Oakes. Some one must inherit my money; my brother is long since dead; even poor, poor Agnes is gone; her sister don't need it; Bluewater is an overrich bachelor, already; you won't take it, and what better can I do with it! If you could have seen the cruel manner in which the spirits of both mother and daughter were crushed to the earth last night, by that beast of a husband and father, you would have felt a desire to relieve their misery, even though it had cost you Bowldero, and half your money in the funds."

"Umph! Bowldero has been in my family five centuries, and is likely to remain there, Master Bluewater, five more; unless, indeed, your dashing Pretender should succeed, and take it away by confiscation."

"There, again, was another inducement. Should I leave my cash to a rich person, and should chance put me on the wrong side in this struggle, the king *de facto* would get it all; whereas, even a German would not have the heart to rob a poor creature like Mildred of her support."

"The Scotch are notorious for bowels, in such matters! Well, have it your own way, Dick. It's of no great moment what you do with your prize-money; though I had supposed it would fall into the hands of this boy, Geoffrey Cleveland, who is no discredit to your blood."

"He will have a hundred thousand pounds, at five-and-twenty, that were left him by old Lady Greenfield, his great-aunt, and that is more than he will know what to do with. But, enough of this. Have you received further tidings from the North, during the night?"

"Not a syllable. This is a retired part of the country; and half Scotland might be capsized in one of its lochs, and we not know of it, for a week, down here in Devonshire. Should I get no intelligence or orders, in the next thirty-six hours, I think of posting up to London, leaving you in command of the fleet."

"That may not be wise. You would scarcely confide so important a trust, in such a crisis, to a man of my political feelings—I will not say opinions; since you attribute all to sentiment."

"I would confide my life and honor to

you, Richard Bluewater, with the utmost confidence in the security of both, so long as it depended on your own acts or inclinations. We must first see, however, what news the *Active* brings us; for, if De Vervillin is really out, I shall assume that the duty of an English sailor is to beat a Frenchman, before all other considerations."

"If he can," dryly observed the other, raising his right leg so high as to place the foot on the top of an old-fashioned chair; an effort that nearly brought his back in a horizontal line.

"I am far from regarding it as a matter of course, Admiral Bluewater; but it has been done sufficiently often to render it an event of no very violent possibility. Ah, here is Magrath to tell us the condition of his patient."

The surgeon of the *Plantagenet* entering the room, at that moment, the conversation was instantly changed.

"Well, Magrath," said Sir Gervaise, stopping suddenly in his quarter-deck pace; "what news of the poor man?"

"He is reviving, Admiral Oakes," returned the phlegmatic surgeon; "but it is like the gleaming of sunshine that streams through clouds, as the great luminary sets behind the hill——"

"O! hang your poetry, doctor; let us have nothing but plain matter-of-fact this morning."

"Well, then, Sir Gervaise, as commander-in-chief, you'll be obeyed, I think. Sir Wycherly Wychecombe is suffering under an attack of apoplexy—or *apoplexis,* as the Greeks had it. The diagnosis of the disease is not easily mistaken, though it has its affinities as well as other maladies. The application for gout, or arthritis, sometimes produce apoplexy; though one disease is seated in the head, while the other usually takes refuge in the feet. Ye'll understand this the more readily, gentlemen, when ye reflect that as a thief is chased from one hiding-place, he commonly endeavors to get into another. I much misgive the prudence of the phlebotomy ye practiced among ye, on the first summons to the patient."

"What the d——l does the man mean by phlebotomy?" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, who had an aversion to medicine, and knew scarcely any of the commonest terms of practice, though expert in bleeding.

"I'm thinking it's what you and Admiral Bluewater so freely administer to his Majesty's enemies, whenever ye fall in with 'em at sea; he, he, he," answered Magrath, chuckling at his own humor; which, as the quantity was small, was all the better in quality.

"Surely he does not mean powder and shot! We give the French shot; Sir Wycherly has not been shot?"

"Varra true, Sir Gervaise, but ye've lot him blood amang ye; a measure that has been somewhat precipitately practiced, I've my misgivings."

"Now, any old woman can tell us better than that, doctor. Blood-letting is the every-day remedy for attacks of this sort."

"I do not dispute the dogmas of elderly persons of the other sex, Sir Gervaise, or your every-day *remedia.* If 'every-day' doctors would save life and alleviate pain, diplomas would be unnecessary; and we might, all of us, practice on the principle of the 'De'el tak' the hindmaist,' as ye did yoursel', Sir Gervaise, when ye cut and slashed amang the Dons, in boarding *El Lirio.* I was there, ye'll both remember, gentlemen; and was obleeged to sew up the gashes ye made with your own irreverent and ungodly hands."

This speech referred to one of the most desperate hand-to-hand struggles in which the two flag officers had ever been engaged; and, as it afforded them the means of exhibiting their personal gallantry, when quite young men, both usually looked back upon the exploit with great self-complacency; Sir Gervaise, in particular, his friend having often declared since that they ought to have been laid on the shelf for life, as a punishment for risking their men in so mad an enterprise, though it did prove to be brilliantly successful.

"That was an affair in which one might engage at twenty-two, Magrath,' observed Bluewater; "but which he ought

to hesitate about thinking of even, after thirty."

"I would do it again, this blessed day, if you would give us a chance!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, striking the back of one hand into the palm of the other, with a sudden energy, that showed how much he was excited by the mere recollection of the scene.

"That w'ud ye!—that w'ud ye!" said Magrath, growing more and more Scotch, as he warmed in the discourse; "ye'd board a mackral-hoy, rather than not have an engagement. Ya'r a vara capital Vice-admiral of the red, Sir Gervaise, but I'm judging ye'd mak' a vara indeeferent loblollyboy."

"Bluewater, I shall be compelled to change ships with you, in order to get rid of the standbys of the *Plantagenet!* They stick to me like leeches; and have got to be so familiar, that they criticise all my orders and don't more than half obey them, in the bargain."

"No one will criticise your nautical commands, Sir Gervaise; though, in the way of the healing airt—science, it should be called—ye're no maire to be trusted than one of the young gentlemen. I'm told you drew your lancet on this poor gentleman as ye'd draw ye'r sword on an enemy!"

"I did, indeed, sir; though Mr. Rotherham had rendered the application of the instrument unnecessary. Apoplexy is a rushing of the blood to the head; and by diminishing the quantity in the veins of the arms or temples, you lessen the pressure on the brain."

"Just layman's practice, sir—just layman's practice. Will you tell me now if the patient's face was red or white? Everything depends on that; which is the true diagnosis of the malady."

"Red, I think; was it not, Bluewater? Red, like old port, of which I fancy the poor man had more than his share."

"Well, in that case, you were not so varra wrong; but they tell me his countenance was pallid and death-like; in which case ye came near committing murder. There is one principle that controls the diagnosis of all cases of apoplexy among ye'r true country gentleman, and that is, that the system is reduced and enfeebled, by habitual devotion to the decanter. In such attacks ye canna' do warse than to let blood. But I'll no be hard upon you, Sir Gervaise; and so we'll drop the subject—though, truth to say, I do not admire your poaching on my manor. Sir Wycherly is materially better, and expresses, as well as a man who has not the use of his tongue, can express a thing, his besetting desire to make his last will and testament. In ordinary cases of *apoplexia*, it is a good practice to oppose this craving; though, as it is my firm opinion that nothing can save the patient's life, I do not set myself against the measure, in this particular case. Thar was a curious discussion at Edinbro', in my youth, gentlemen, on the question whether the considerations connected with the disposition of the property, or the considerations connected with the patient's health, ought to preponderate in the physician's mind, when it might be reasonably doubted whether the act of making a will, would or would not essentially affect the nervous system, or otherwise derange the functions of the body. A very pretty argument, in excellent Edinbro' Latin, was made on each side of the question. I think, on the whole, the physicos had the best o' it; for they could show a plausible present evil as opposed to a possible remote good."

"Has Sir Wycherly mentioned my name this morning?" asked the Vice-admiral, with interest.

"He has, indeed, Sir Gervaise; and that in a way so manifestly connected with his will, that I'm opining ye'll no be forgotten in the legacies. The name of Bluewater was in his mouth also."

"In which case no time should be lost; for, never before have I felt half the interest in the disposition of a stranger's estate! Hark! Are not those wheels rattling in the courtyard?"

"Ye'r senses are most perfect, Sir Gervaise, and that I've always said was one reason why ye're so great an admiral," returned Magrath. "Mind, only one, Sir

Gervaise; for many qualities united, are necessary to make a truly great man. I see a middle-aged gentleman alighting, and servants around him, who wear the same liveries as those of this house. Some relative, no doubt, come to look after the legacies also."

"This must be Sir Reginald Wychecombe; it may not be amiss if we go forward to receive him, Bluewater."

At this suggestion, the Rear-admiral drew in his legs, which had not changed their position on account of the presence of the surgeon, arose, and followed Sir Gervaise, as the latter left the room.

CHAHTER XIII.

"Videsne quis venit?
Video, et gaudeo."
—LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

TOM WYCHECOMBE had experienced an uneasiness that it is unnecessary to explain ever since he learned that his reputed uncle had sent a messenger to bring the "half-bood" to the Hall. From the moment he got a clew to the fact, he took sufficient pains to ascertain what was in the wind; and when Sir Reginald Wychecombe entered the house, the first person he met was this spurious supporter of the honors of his name.

"Sir Reginald Wychecombe, I presume, from the arms and the liveries," said Tom, endeavoring to assume the manner of a host. "It is grateful to find that, though we are separated by quite two centuries, all the usages and the bearings of the family are equally preserved and respected, by both its branches."

"I am Sir Reginald Wychecombe, sir, and endeavor not to forget the honorable ancestry from which I am derived. May I ask what kinsman I have the pleasure now to meet?"

"Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, sir, at your command; the eldest son of Sir Wycherly's next brother, the late Mr. Baron Wychecombe. I trust, Sir Reginald, you have not considered us so far removed in blood, as to have entirely overlooked our births, marriages, and deaths."

"I have *not*, sir," returned the Baronet dryly, and with an emphasis that disturbed his listener, though the cold, jesuitical smile that accompanied the words had the effect to calm his vivid apprehensions. "*All* that relates to the house of Wychecombe has interest in my eyes; and I have endeavored successfully, I trust, to ascertain *all* that relates to its births, *marriages* and deaths. I greatly regret that the second time I enter this venerable dwelling, should be on an occasion as melancholy as this, on which I am now summoned. How is your respectable—how is Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, I wish to say?"

There was sufficient in this answer, taken in connection with the deliberate, guarded, and yet expressive manner of the speaker, to make Tom extremely uncomfortable though there was also sufficient to leave him in doubt as to his namesake's true meaning. The words emphasized by the latter were touched lightly, though distinctly; and the cold, artificial smile with which they were uttered, completely baffled the sagacity of a rogue as commonplace as the heir-expectant. Then the sudden change in the construction of the last sentence, and the substitution of the name of the person mentioned, for the degree of affinity in which he was supposed to stand to Tom, might be merely a rigid observance of the best tone of society, or it might be equivocal. All these little distinctions gleamed across the mind of Tom Wychecombe; but that was not the moment to pursue the investigation. Courtesy required that he should make an immediate answer, which he succeeded in doing steadily enough as to general appearances, though his sagacious and practical questioner perceived that his words had not failed of producing the impression he intended; for he had looked to their establishing a species of authority over the young man.

"My honored and beloved uncle has revived a little, they tell me," said Tom; "but I fear these appearances are delusive. After eighty-four, death has a fearful hold upon us, sir! The worst of it is, that my poor, dear uncle's mind is sensibly affected; and it is quite impossible to get

at any of his little wishes, in the way of memorials and messages——"

"How then, sir, came Sir Wycherly to honor me with a request to visit him?" demanded the other, with an extremely awkward pertinency.

"I suppose, sir, he has succeeded in muttering your name, and that a natural construction has been put on its use, at such a moment. His will has been made sometime, I understand: though I am ignorant of even the name of the executor, as it is closed in an envelope, and sealed with Sir Wycherly's arms. It cannot be then, on account of a will that he has wished to see you. I rather think, as the next of the family, out of the direct line of succession, he may have ventured to name you as his executor of the will in existence and has thought it proper to notify you of the same."

"Yes, sir," returned Sir Reginald, in his usual cold, wary manner; "though it would have been more in conformity with usage, had the notification taken the form of a request to serve, previously to making the testament. My letter was signed 'Gervaise Oakes,' and, as they tell me a fleet is in the neighborhood, I have supposed that the celebrated Admiral of that name has done me the honor to write it."

"You are not mistaken, sir; Sir Gervaise Oakes is in the house—ah—here he comes to receive you, accompanied by Rear-admiral Bluewater, whom the sailors call his mainmast."

The foregoing conversation had taken place in a little parlor that led off from the great hall, whither Tom had conducted his guest, and in which the two admirals now made their appearance. Introductions were scarcely necessary, the uniform and star—for in that age officers usually appeared in their robes—the uniform and star of Sir Gervaise at once proclaimed his rank and name; while between Sir Reginald and Bluewater there existed a slight personal acquaintance, which had grown out of their covert, but deep Jacobite sympathies.

"Sir Gervaise Oakes," and "Sir Reginald Wychecombe," passed between the gentlemen, with a hearty shake of the hand from the Admiral, which was met by a cold touch of the fingers on the part of the other, that might very well have passed for the great model of the sophisticated manipulation of the modern salute, but which, in fact, was the result of temperament rather than of fashion. As soon as this ceremony was gone through, and a few brief expressions of courtesy were exchanged, the new-comer turned to Bluewater, with an air of greater freedom, and continued—

"And you, too, Sir Richard Bluewater! I rejoice to meet an acquaintance in this melancholy scene."

"I am happy to see you, Sir Reginald; though you have conferred on me a title to which I have no proper claim."

"No! the papers tell us you have received one of the lately vacant red ribbons?"

"I believe some such honor has been in contemplation——"

"Contemplation! I do assure you, sir, your name is fairly and distinctly gazetted—as, by sending to my carriage, it will be in my power to show you. I am then the first to call you Sir Richard."

"Excuse me, Sir Reginald, there is some little misapprehension in this matter; I prefer to remain plain Rear-admiral Bluewater. In due season all will be explained."

The parties exchanged looks, which, in times like those in which they lived, were sufficiently intelligible to both; and the conversation was instantly changed. Before Sir Reginald released the hand he held, however, he gave it a cordial squeeze, an intimation that was returned by a warm pressure from Bluewater. The party then began to converse of Sir Wycherly, his actual condition, and his probable motive in desiring to see his distant kinsman. This motive Sir Gervaise, regardless of the presence of Tom Wychecombe, declared to be a wish to make a will; and, as he believed, the intention of naming Sir Reginald his executor, if not in some still more interesting capacity.

"I understand Sir Wycherly has a considerable sum entirely at his own disposal," continued the Vice-admiral: "and

I confess I like to see a man remember his friends and servants, generously, in his last moments. The estate is entailed, I hear; and I suppose Mr. Thomas Wychecombe here, will be none the worse for that precaution in his ancestor, let the old gentleman do as he pleases with his savings."

Sir Gervaise was so much accustomed to command, that he did not feel the singularity of his own interference in the affairs of a family of what might be called strangers, though the circumstance struck Sir Reginald as a little odd. Nevertheless, the last had sufficient penetration to understand the Vice-admiral's character at a glance, and the peculiarity made no lasting impression. When the allusion was made to Tom's succession, as a matter of course, however, he cast a cold, but withering look, at the reputed heir, which almost chilled the marrow in the bones of the jealous rogue.

"Might I say a word to you in your own room, Sir Gervaise?" asked Sir Reginald, in an aside. "These matters ought not to be indecently hurried; and I wish to understand the ground better, before I advance."

This question was overheard by Bluewater; who, begging the gentlemen to remain where they were, withdrew himself, taking Tom Wychecombe with him. As soon as they were alone, Sir Reginald drew from his companion, by questions warily but ingeniously put, a history of all that had occurred within the last twenty-four hours: a knowledge of the really helpless state of Sir Wycherly, and of the manner in which he himself had been summoned, included. When satisfied, he expressed a desire to see the sick man.

"By the way, Sir Reginald," said the Vice-admiral, with his hand on the lock of the door, arresting his own movement to put the question: "I see by your manner of expressing yourself, that the law has not been entirely overlooked in your education. Do you happen to know what 'half-blood' means? It is either a medical or a legal term, and I understand few but nautical."

"You could not apply to any man in England, Sir Gervaise, better qualified to tell you," answered the Hertfordshire Baronet, smiling expressively. "I am a barrister of the Middle Temple, having been educated as a younger son, and having since succeeded an elder brother, at the age of twenty-seven; I stand in the unfortunate relation of the 'half-blood' myself, to this very estate, on which we are now conversing."

Sir Reginald then proceeded to explain the law to the other, as we have already pointed out to the reader; performing the duty succinctly, but quite clearly.

"Bless me!—bless me! Sir Reginald," exclaimed the direct-minded and just-minded sailor, "here must be some mistake! A fortieth cousin, or the king, take this estate before yourself, though you are directly descended from all the old Wychecombes of the times of the Plantagenets!"

"Such is the common law, Sir Gervaise. Were I Sir Wycherly's half-brother, or a son by a second wife of our common father, I could not take from him, although that common father had earned the estate by his own hands, or services."

"This is damnable, sir—damnable; and you'll pardon me, but I can hardly believe we have such a monstrous principle in the good, honest, well-meaning laws of good, honest, well-meaning old England!"

Sir Reginald was one of the few lawyers of his time who did not recognize the virtue of this particular provision of the common law; a circumstance that probably arose from his having so small an interest now in the mysteries of the profession, and so large an interest in the family estate of Wychecombe, destroyed by its *dictum*. He was consequently less surprised, and not at all hurt, at the evident manner in which the sailor repudiated his statement, as doing violence equally to reason, justice, and probability.

"Good, honest, well-meaning old England tolerates many grievous things, notwithstanding, Sir Gervaise," he answered; "among others, it tolerates the law of the half-blood. Much depends on the manner in which men view these

things; that which seems gold to one, resembling silver in the eyes of another. Now, I dare say,"—this was said as a feeler, and with a smile that might pass for ironical or confiding, as the listener pleased to take it—"now, I dare say, the clans would tell us that England tolerates an usurper, while her lawful prince was in banishment; though you and I might not feel disposed to allow it."

Sir Gervaise started, and cast a quick, suspicious glance at the speaker; but there the latter stood, with as open and guileless an expression on his handsome features as was ever seen in the countenance of confiding sixteen.

"Your supposititious case is no parallel," returned the Vice-admiral, losing every shade of suspicion at this appearance of careless frankness; "since men often follow their feelings in their allegiance, while the law is supposed to be governed by reason and justice. But, now we are on the subject, will you tell me, Sir Reginald, if you also know what a *nullus* is?"

"I have no further knowledge on the subject, Sir Gervaise," returned the other, smiling, this time quite naturally, "than is to be found in the Latin dictionaries and grammars."

"Aye, you mean *nullus, nulla, nullum.* Even we sailors know that; as we all go to school before we go to sea. But Sir Wycherly, in efforts to make himself understood, called you a 'half-blood.'"

"And quite correctly; I admit such to be the fact; and that I have no more legal claim, whatever, on this estate, than you have yourself. My moral right, however, may be somewhat better."

"It is much to your credit that you so frankly admit it, Sir Reginald; for, hang me, if I think even the judges would dream of raising such an objection to your succeeding, unless reminded of it."

"Therein you do them injustice, Sir Gervaise; as it is their duty to administer the laws, let them be what they may."

"Perhaps you are right, sir. But the reason for my asking what a *nullus* is, was the circumstance that Sir Wycherly, in the course of his efforts to speak, repeatedly called his nephew and heir, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, by that epithet."

"Did he, indeed? Was the epithet, as you well term it, *filius nullius?*"

"I rather think it was *nullus*—though I do believe the word *filius* was muttered, once or twice, also."

"Yes, sir, this has been the case; and I am not sorry Sir Wycherly is aware of the fact, as I hear that the young man affects to consider himself in a different point of view. A *filius nullius* is the legal term for a bastard—the 'son of nobody,' as you will at once understand. I am fully aware that such is the unfortunate predicament of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, whose father, I possess complete evidence to show, was never married to his mother."

"And yet, Sir Reginald, the impudent rascal carries in his pocket even, a certificate, signed by some parish priest in London, to prove the contrary."

The civil Baronet seemed surprised at this assertion of his military brother; but Sir Gervaise explaining what had passed between himself and the young man, he could no longer entertain any doubt of the fact.

"Since you have seen the document," resumed Sir Reginald, "it must, indeed, be so; and this misguided boy is prepared to take any desperate step in order to obtain the title and the estate. All that he has said about a will must be fabulous, as no man in his senses would risk his neck to obtain so hollow a distinction as a baronetcy—we are equally members of the class, and may speak frankly, Sir Gervaise—and the will would secure the estate, if there were one. I cannot think, therefore, that there is a will at all."

"If this will were not altogether to the fellow's liking, would not the marriage, beside the hollow honor of which you have spoken, put the whole of the landed property in his possession, under the entail?"

"It would, indeed; and I thank you for the suggestion. If, however, Sir Wycherly is desirous, now, of making a new will, and has strength and mind sufficient to execute his purpose, the old one need give us no concern. This is a most deli-

cate affair for one in my situation to engage in, sir; and I greatly rejoice that I find such honorable and distinguished witnesses in the house, to clear my reputation, should anything occur to require such exculpation. On the one side, Sir Gervaise, there is the danger of an ancient estate's falling into the hands of the crown, and this, too, while one of no stain of blood, derived from the same honorable ancestors as the last possessor, is in existence; or, on the other, of its becoming the prey of one of base blood, and of but very doubtful character. The circumstance that Sir Wycherly desired my presence is a great deal; and I trust to you, and to those with you, to vindicate the fairness of my course. If it's your pleasure, sir, we will now go to the sick chamber."

"With all my heart. I think, however, Sir Reginald," said the Vice-admiral, as he approached the door; "that even in the event of an escheat, you would find these Brunswick princes sufficiently liberal to restore the property. I could not answer for those wandering Scotchmen, who have so many breechless nobles to enrich; but, I think, with the Hanoverians you would be safe."

"The last have certainly one recommendation the most," returned the other, smiling courteously, but in a way so equivocal that even Sir Gervaise was momentarily struck by it; "they have fed so well, now, at the crib, that they may not have the same voracity as those who have been long fasting. It would be, however, more pleasant to take these lands from a Wychecombe—a Wychecombe to a Wychecombe—than to receive them anew from even the Plantagenet who made the first grant."

This terminated the private dialogue, as the colloquists entered the hall, just as the last speaker concluded. Wycherly was conversing, earnestly, with Mrs. Dutton and Mildred, at the far end of the hall, when the Baronets appeared; but, catching the eye of the Admiral, he said a few words hastily to his companions, and joined the two gentlemen, who were now on their way to the sick man's chamber.

"Here is a namesake, if not a relative, Sir Reginald," observed Sir Gervaise, introducing the lieutenant; "and one, I rejoice to say, of whom all even of your honorable name have reason to be proud."

Sir Reginald's bow was courteous and bland, as the Admiral proceeded to complete his introduction; but Wycherly felt that the keen, searching look he bestowed on himself was disagreeable.

"I am not at all aware that I have the smallest claim to the honor of being Sir Reginald Wychecombe's relative," he said, with cold reserve. "Indeed, until last evening, I was ignorant of the existence of the Hertfordshire branch of this family; and you will remember, Sir Gervaise, that I am a Virginian."

"A Virginian!" exclaimed his namesake, taken so much by surprise as to lose a little of his self-command, "I did not know, indeed, that any who bear the name had found their way to the colonies."

"And if they had, sir, they would have met with a set of fellows every way fit to be their associates, Sir Reginald. We English are a little clannish—I hate the word, too; it has such a narrow, Scotch sound — but we *are* clannish, although generally provided with garments to our nether limbs; and we sometimes look down upon even a son, whom the love of adventure has led into that part of the world. In my view an Englishman is an Englishman, let him come from what part of the empire he may. That is what I call genuine liberality, Sir Reginald."

"Quite true, Sir Gervaise; and a Scotchman is a Scotchman, even though he come from the north of Tweed."

This was quietly said, but the Vice-admiral felt the merited rebuke it contained, and he had the good-nature and the good sense to laugh at it, and to admit his own prejudices. This little encounter brought the party to Sir Wycherly's door, where all three remained until it was ascertained that they might enter.

The next quarter of an hour brought about a great change in the situation of all the principal inmates of Wychecombe Hall. The interdict was taken off the rooms of Sir Wycherly, and in them had collected all the gentlemen, Mrs. Dutton

and her daughter, with three or four of the upper servants of the establishment. Even Galleygo contrived to thrust his ungainly person in, among the rest, though he had the discretion to keep in the background among his fellows. In a word, both dressing-room and bedroom had their occupants, though the last was principally filled by the medical men, and those whose rank gave them claims to be near the person of the sick.

It was now past a question known that poor Sir Wycherly was on his death-bed. His mind had sensibly improved, nor was his speech any worse; but his physical system generally had received a shock that rendered recovery hopeless. It was the opinion of the physicians that he might possibly survive several days; or, that he might be carried off in a moment, by a return of the paralytic affection.

The Baronet, himself, appeared to be perfectly conscious of his situation, as was apparent by the anxiety he expressed to get his friends together, and more especially the concern he felt to make a due disposition of his worldly affairs. The medical men had long resisted both wishes, until, convinced that the question was reduced to one of a few hours more or less of life, and that denial was likely to produce worse effects than compliance, they finally and unanimously consented.

"It's no a great concession to mortal infirmity to let a dying man have his way," whispered Magrath to the two Admirals, as the latter entered the room. "Sir Wycherly is a hopeless case, and we'll just consent to let him make a few codicils, seeing that he so fairvently desires it; and then there may be fewer hopeless deevils left behind him, when he's gathered to his forefathers."

"Here we are, my dear Sir Wycherly," said the Vice-admiral, who never lost an occasion to effect his purpose, by any unnecessary delay; "here we all are, anxious to comply with your wishes. Your kinsman, Sir Reginald Wychecombe, is also present, and desirous of doing your pleasure."

It was a painful sight to see a man on his death-bed, so anxious to discharge the forms of the world, as the master of the Hall now appeared to be. There had been an unnecessary alienation between the heads of the two branches of the family; not arising from any quarrel, or positive cause of disagreement, but from a silent conviction in both parties, that each was unsuited to the other. They had met a few times, and always parted without regret. The case was now different; the separation was, in one sense at least, to be eternal; and all minor considerations, all caprices of habits or despotism of tastes, faded before the solemn impressions of the moment. Still, Sir Wycherly could not forget that he was master of Wychecombe, and that his namesake was esteemed a man of refinement, and in his simple way of thinking, he would fain have arisen, in order to do him honor. A little gentle violence, even, was necessary to keep the patient quiet.

"Much honored, sir—greatly pleased," muttered Sir Wycherly, the words coming from him with difficulty. "Same ancestors — same name — Plantagenets — old house, sir—head go, new one come—none better than——"

"Do not distress yourself to speak, unnecessarily, my dear sir," interrupted Sir Reginald, with more tenderness for the patient than consideration for his own interest, as the next words promised to relate to the succession. "Sir Gervaise Oakes tells me he understands your wishes, generally, and that he is now preparing to gratify them. First relieve your mind, in matters of business, and then I shall be most happy to exchange with you the feelings of kindred."

"Yes, Sir Wycherly," put in Sir Gervaise on this hint; "I believe I have now found the clew to all you wish to say. The few words written by you last night were the commencement of a will, which it is your desire to make. Do not speak, but raise your right hand, if I am not mistaken."

The sick man actually stretched his right arm above the bedclothes, and his dull eyes lighted with an expression of pleasure, that proved how strongly his feelings were enlisted in the result.

"You see, gentlemen!" said Sir Gervaise, with emphasis. "No one can mistake the meaning of this! Come nearer, doctor—Mr. Rotherham—all who have no probable interest in the affair—I wish it to be seen that Sir Wycherly is desirous of making his will."

The Vice-admiral now went through the ceremony of repeating his request, and got the same significant answer.

"So I understood it, Sir Wycherly, and I believe now I also understand all about the 'half,' and the 'whole,' and the '*nullus*.' You meant to tell us that your kinsman, Sir Reginald Wychecombe, was the 'half-blood' as respects yourself, and that Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, your nephew, is what is termed in law—however painful this may be, gentlemen, at such solemn moments the truth must be plainly spoken—that Mr. Thomas Wychecombe is what the law terms a '*filius nullius*.' If we have understood you in this, also, have the goodness to give the company the same sign of assent."

The last words were scarcely spoken, before Sir Wycherly again raised his arm and nodded his head.

"Here there can be no mistake, and no one rejoices in it more than I do myself; for the unintelligible words gave me a great deal of vexation. Well, my dear sir, understanding your wishes, my secretary, Mr. Atwood, has drawn the commencement of a will, in the usual form, using your own pious and proper language of—'In the name of God, Amen,' as the commencement; and he stands ready to write down your bequests, as you may see fit to name them. We will take them, first, on a separate piece of paper; then read them to you, for your approbation; and, afterward, transcribe them into the will. I believe, Sir Reginald, that mode would withstand the subtleties of all the gentlemen of all the Inns of Court?"

"It is a very proper and prudent mode for executing a will, sir, under the peculiar circumstances," returned he of Hertfordshire. "But, Sir Gervaise, my situation here is a little delicate, as may be that of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe—others of the name and family, if such there be. Would it not be well to inquire if our presence is actually desired by the intended testator?"

"Is it your wish, Sir Wycherly, that your kinsmen and namesake remain in the room, or shall they retire until the will is executed? I will call over the names of the company, and when you wish any one in particular to stay in the room, you will nod your head."

"All—all stay," muttered Sir Wycherly; "Sir Reginald—Tom—Wycherly—all—"

"This seems explicit enough, gentlemen," resumed the Vice-admiral. "You are requested to stay; and, if I might venture an opinion, our poor friend has named those on whom he intends his bequests to fall—and pretty much, too, in the order in which they will come."

"That will appear more unanswerably when Sir Wycherly has expressed his intention in words," observed Sir Reginald, very desirous that there should not be the smallest appearance of dictation or persuasion offered to his kinsman, at a moment so grave. "Let me entreat that no leading questions be put."

"Sir Gervaise understands leading in battle much better than in cross-examination, Sir Reginald," Bluewater observed, in a tone so low, that none heard him but the person to whom the words were addressed. "I think we shall sooner get at Sir Wycherly wishes by allowing him to take his own course."

The other bowed, and appeared disposed to acquiesce. In the mean time preparations were making for a construction of the will. Atwood seated himself at a table near the bed, and commenced nibbing his pens; the medical men administered a cordial; Sir Gervaise caused all the witnesses to range themselves around the room, in a way that each might fairly see and be seen; taking care, however, so to dispose of Wycherly, as to leave no doubt of his handsome person coming into the sick man's view. The lieutenant's modesty might have rebelled at this arrangement, had he not found himself immediately at the side of Mildred.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Yet all is o'er!—fear, doubt, suspense, are fled,
Let brighter thoughts be with the virtuous dead!
The final ordeal of the soul is past,
And the pale brow it sealed to Heaven at last."
—MRS. HEMANS.

IT will be easily supposed that Tom Wychecombe witnessed the proceedings related in the preceding chapter with dismay. The circumstance that he actually possessed a *bona fide* will of his uncle, which left him heir of all the latter owned, real or personal, had made him audacious, and first induced him to take the bold stand of asserting his legitimacy, and of claiming all its consequences. He had fully determined to assume the title on the demise of Sir Wycherly; plausibly enough supposing that, as there was no heir to the baronetcy, the lands once in his quiet possession, no one would take sufficient interest in the matter to dispute his right to the rank. Here, however, was a blow that menaced death to all his hopes. His illegitimacy seemed to be known to others, and there was every prospect of a new will's supplanting the old one, in its more important provisions, at least. He was at a loss to imagine what had made this sudden change in his uncle's intentions; for he did not sufficiently understand himself, to perceive that the few months of close communion which had succeeded the death of his reputed father, had sufficed to enlighten Sir Wycherly on the subject of his own true character, and to awaken a disgust that had remained passive, until suddenly aroused by the necessity of acting; and least of all could he understand how surprisingly the moral vision of men is purified and enlarged, as respects both the past and the future, by the near approach of death. Although symptoms of strong dissatisfaction escaped him, he quieted his feelings as much as possible, cautiously waiting for any occurrence that might be used in setting aside the contemplated instrument, hereafter; or, what would be still better, to defeat its execution, now.

As soon as the necessary preparations were made, Atwood, his pen nibbed, ink at hand, and paper spread, was ready to proceed; and a breathless stillness existing in the chamber, Sir Gervaise resumed the subject on which they were convened.

"Atwood will read to you what he has already written, Sir Wycherly," he said; "should the phraseology be agreeable to you, you will have the goodness to make a sign to that effect. Well, if all is ready, you can now commence—hey, Atwood?"

"'In the name of God, Amen,'" commenced the methodical secretary; "'I, Wycherly Wychecombe, Bart., of Wychecombe Hall, in the county of Devon, being of sound mind, but of a feeble state of health, and having the view of death before my eyes, revoking all other wills, codicils, or testamentary devises, whatsoever, do make and declare this instrument to be my said will and testament; that is to say, Imprimis, I do hereby constitute and appoint —— —— of ——, the executor of this my said will, with all the powers and authority that the law gives, or may hereafter give to said executor. Secondly, I give and bequeath to ——.' This is all that is yet written, Sir Gervaise, blanks being left for the name or names of the executor or executors, as well as for the 's' at the end of 'executor,' should the testator see fit to name more than one."

"There, Sir Reginald," said the Vice-admiral, not altogether without exultation: "this is the way we prepare these things on board a man-of-war! A flag-officer's secretary needs have himself qualified to do anything, short of a knowledge of administering to the cure of souls!"

"And the cure of bodies, ye'll be permitting me to add, Sir Gervaise," observed Magrath, taking an enormous pinch of a strong yellow stuff.

"Our secretary would make but a lubberly fist at turning off a delicate turtle-soup out of pig's head; such as we puts on our table at sea, so often," muttered Galleygo in the ear of Mrs. Larder.

"I see nothing to object to, Sir Gervaise, if the language is agreeable to, Sir Wycherly," answered the barrister by profession, though not by practice. "It would be advisable to get his approbation of even the language."

"That we intend to do, of course, sir. Sir Wycherly, do you find the terms of this will to your liking?"

Sir Wycherly smiled, and very clearly gave the sign of assent.

"I thought as much—for Atwood has made the wills of two Admirals, and of three captains, to my knowledge; and my Lord Chief Justice said that one of the last would have done credit to the best conveyancer in England, and that it was a pity the testator had nothing to bequeath. Now, Sir Wycherly, will you have one executor, or more? If one, hold up a single finger; and a finger for each additional executor you wish us to insert in these blanks. One, Atwood—you perceive, gentlemen, that Sir Wycherly raises but one finger; and so you can give a flourish at the end of the 'r,' as the word will be in the singular—hey, Atwood?"

The secretary did as directed, and then reported himself ready to proceed.

"It will be necessary for you now to name your executor, Sir Wycherly; make as little effort as possible, as we shall understand the name alone."

Sir Wycherly succeeded in uttering the name of "Sir Reginald Wychecombe," quite audibly.

"This is plain enough," resumed the Vice-admiral; "how does the sentence read now, Atwood?"

"'Imprimis, I do hereby constitute and appoint Sir Reginald Wychecombe of Wychecombe-Regis, in the county of Herts, Baronet, the executor of this my said will, etc.'"

"If that clause is to your liking, Sir Wycherly, have the goodness to give the sign agreed on."

The sick man smiled, nodded his head, raised his hand, and looked anxiously at his kinsman.

"I consent to serve, Sir Wycherly, if such is your desire," observed the nominee, who detected the meaning of his kinsman's look.

"And now, sir," continued the Vice-admiral; "it is necessary to ask you a few questions, in order that Atwood may know what next to write. Is it your desire to bequeath any real estate?" Sir Wycherly assented. "Do you wish to bequeath all your real estate?" The same sign of assent was given. "Do you wish to bequeath all to one person?" The sign of assent was given to this also. "This makes plain sailing, and a short run—hey, Atwood?"

The secretary wrote as fast as possible, and in two or three minutes he read aloud, as follows:

"'Secondly, I make and declare the following bequests or devises: that is to say, I give and bequeath to —— of ——, all the real estate of which I may die seized, together with all the houses, tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances thereunto belonging, and all my rights to the same, whether in law or equity, to be possessed and enjoyed by the said —— —— of —— in fee, by —— heirs, executors, administrators, or assigns, forever.' There are blanks for the name and description, as well as for the sex of the devisee," added the secretary.

"All very proper and legal, I believe, Sir Reginald? I am glad you think so, sir. Now, Sir Wycherly, we wait for the name of the lucky person you mean thus to favor."

"Sir Reginald Wychecombe," the sick man uttered, painfully; "half-blood—no *nullus*. Sir Michael's heir—my heir."

"This is plain English!" cried Sir Gervaise, in the way of a man who is not displeased; "put in the name of 'Sir Reginald Wychecombe of Wychecombe Regis, Herts.' Atwood—aye—that just fills the blank handsomely; you want 'his heirs, executors, etc.,' in the other blank."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Gervaise; it should read 'by himself, his heirs, etc.'"

"Very true—very true, Atwood. Now read it slowly, and Sir Wycherly will assent, if he approve."

This was done, and Sir Wycherly not only approved, but it was apparent to all present, the abashed, and confounded Tom himself not excepted, that he approved, with a feeling akin to delight.

"That gives a black eye to all the land—hey, Atwood?" said Sir Gervaise;

who, by this time, had entered into the business in hand with all the interest of a regular notary—or, rather, with that of one on whose shoulders rested the responsibility of success or failure. "We come next to the personals. Do you wish to bequeath your furniture, wines, horses, carriages, and other things of that sort, to any particular person, Sir Wycherly?"

"All—Sir Reginald—Wychecombe—half-blood—old Sir Michael's heir," answered the testator.

"Good! clap that down, Atwood, for it is doing the thing as I like to see family affairs settled. As soon as you are ready, let us hear how it sounds in writing."

"'I furthermore bequeath to the said Sir Reginald Wychecombe of Wychecombe-Regis, as aforesaid, Baronet, all my personal property, whatsoever,'" read Atwood, as soon as ready; "'including furniture, wines, pictures, books, horses and carriages, and all other goods and chattels of which I may die possessed, excepting thereout and therefrom, nevertheless, such sums in money, stocks, bonds, notes, or other securites for debts, or such articles as I may in this instrument especially devise to any other person.' We can now go to especial legacies, Sir Gervaise, and then another clause may make Sir Reginald residuary legatee, if such be Sir Wycherly's pleasure."

"If you approve of that clause, my dear sir, make the usual sign of assent."

Sir Wycherly both raised his hand and nodded his head, evidently quite satisfied.

"Now, my good sir, we come to the pounds—no—guineas? You like that better; well, I confess that it sounds better on the ear, and is more in conformity with the habits of gentlemen. Will you now bequeath guineas? Good! first name the legatee—is that right, Sir Reginald?"

"Quite right, Sir Gervaise; and Sir Wycherly will understand that he now names the first person to whom he wished to bequeath anything else."

"Milly," murmured the sick man.

"What? Mills!—the mills go with the land, Sir Reginald?"

"He means Miss Mildred Dutton," eagerly interposed Wycherly, though with sufficient modesty.

"Yes—right—right," added the testator. "Little Milly—Milly Dutton—good little Milly."

Sir Gervaise hesitated, and looked round at Bluewater, as much as to say, "This is bringing coals to Newcastle;" but Atwood took the idea, and wrote the bequest in the usual form.

"'I give and bequeath to Mildred Dutton,'" he read aloud, "'daughter of Francis Dutton, of the Royal Navy, the sum of——' what sum shall I fill the blank with, Sir Wycherly?"

"Three—three—yes, three."

"Hundreds or thousands, my good sir?" asked Sir Gervaise, a little surprised at the amount of the bequest.

"Guineas—three—thousand—guineas—five per cents."

"That's as plain as logarithms. Give the young lady three thousand guineas in the fives, Atwood."

"'I give and bequeath to Mildred Dutton, daughter of Francis Dutton of the Royal Navy, the sum of three thousand guineas in the five per cent. stocks of this kingdom.' Will that do, Sir Wycherly?"

The old man looked at Mildred and smiled benevolently; for, at that moment, he felt he was placing the pure and lovely girl above the ordinary contingencies of her situation, by rendering her independent.

"Whose name shall we next insert, Sir Wycherly?" resumed the Vice-admiral. "There must be many more of the guineas left."

"Gregory—and—James—children of my brother Thomas—Baron Wychecombe—five thousand guineas each," added the testator, making a great effort to express his meaning as clearly as possible.

He was understood; and after a short consultation with the Vice-admiral, Atwood wrote out the devise at length.

"'I give and bequeath to my nephews, Gregory and James Wychecombe, the reputed sons of my late brother, Thomas Wychecombe, one of the Barons of his Majesty's Exchequer, the sum of five thousand guineas, each, in the five per cent. funded debt of this kingdom.'"

"Do you approve of the devise, Sir Wycherly? if so, make the usual sign of assent."

Sir Wycherly complied, as in all the previous cases, of his approval.

"Whose name shall we next insert, in readiness for a legacy, Sir Wycherly?" asked the Admiral.

Here was a long pause, the Baronet evidently turning over in his mind what he had done, and what yet remained to do.

"Spread yourselves, my friends, in such a way as to permit the testator to see you all," continued the Vice-admiral, motioning with his hand to widen the circle around the bed, which had been contracted a little by curiosity and interest; "stand more this way, *Lieutenant Wycherly Wychecombe*, that the ladies may see and be seen; and you, too, Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, come further in front, where your uncle will observe you."

This speech pretty exactly reflected the workings of the speaker's mind. The idea that Wycherly was a natural child of the Baronet's, notwithstanding the Virginian story, was uppermost in his thoughts; and taking the supposed fact in connection with the young man's merit, he earnestly desired to obtain a legacy for him. As for Tom, he cared little whether his name appeared in the will or not! Justice was now substantially done, and the judge's property being sufficient for his wants, the present situation of the lately reputed heir excited but little sympathy. Nevertheless, Sir Gervaise thought it would be generous, under the circumstances, to remind the testator that such a being as Tom Wychecombe existed.

"Here is your nephew, Mr. Thomas, Sir Wycherly," he said; "is it your wish to let his name appear in your will?"

The sick man smiled coldly, but he moved his head, as much as to imply assent.

"'I give and bequeath to Thomas Wychecombe, the eldest reputed son of my late brother, Thomas, one of the Barons of his Majesty's Exchequer,'" read Atwood, when the clause was duly written, "'the sum of ——, in the five per cent. stocks of this kingdom.'"

"What sum will you have inserted, Sir Wycherly?" asked the Vice-admiral.

"Fifty—fifty—*pounds*," said the testator, in a voice clearer and fuller than he had before used that day.

The necessary words were immediately inserted; the clause, as completed, was read again, and the approval was confirmed by a distinctly pronounced "Yes." Tom started, but, as all the others maintained their self-command, the business of the moment did not the less proceed.

"Do you wish any more names introduced into your will, Sir Wycherly?" asked the Vice-admiral. "You have bequeathed but—a-a-a—how much—hey, Atwood?—aye, ten and three are thirteen, and fifty *pounds*, make £13,180; and I hear you have £20,000 funded, besides loose cash, beyond a doubt."

"Ann Larder—Samuel Cork—Richard Bitts—David Brush—Phœbe Keys," said Sir Wycherly, slowly, giving time after each pause for Atwood to write; naming his cook, butler, groom, valet or body-servant, and housekeeper, in the order they have been laid before the reader.

"How much to each, Sir Wycherly? I see Atwood has made short work, and put them all in the same clause—that will never do, unless the legacies are the same."

"Good—good—right," muttered the testator; "£200 — each — £1,000— all—money—money."

This settled the point, and the clause was regularly written, read, and approved.

"This raises the money bequests to £14,180, Sir Wycherly—some £6,000 or £7,000 more must remain to be disposed of. Stand a little further this way, if you please, Mr. *Wycherly* Wychecombe, and allow the ladies more room. Whose name shall we insert next, sir?"

Sir Wycherly, thus directed by the eager desire of the Admiral to serve the gallant lieutenant, fastened his eyes on the young man, regarding him quite a minute in silent attention.

"Virginian—same name—American—colonies—good lad—brave lad—£1,000," muttered the sick man between his teeth; and yet so breathless was the quiet of the

chamber, at that moment, every syllable was heard by all present. "Yes—£1,000 —Wycherly Wychecombe—royal navy—"

Atwood's pen was running rapidly over the paper, and had just reached the name of the contemplated legatee, when his hand was arrested by the voice of the young man himself.

"Stop, Mr. Atwood—do not insert any clause in my favor!" cried Wycherly, his face the color of crimson, and his chest heaving with the emotions he felt so difficult to repress. "I decline the legacy—it will be useless to write it, as I will not receive a shilling."

"Young sir," said Gervaise, with a little of the severity of a superior, when he rebukes an inferior, in his manner; "you speak hastily. It is not the office of an auditor or of a spectator, to repel the kindness of a man about to pass from the face of the earth, into the more immediate presence of his God!"

"I have every sentiment of respect for Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, sir, every friendly wish for his speedy recovery, and a long evening to his life; but I will accept of the money of no man who holds my country in such obvious distaste, as, it is apparent, the testator holds mine."

"You are an Englishman, I believe, *Lieutenant* Wychecombe; and a servant of King George II.?"

"I am not an Englishman, Sir Gervaise Oakes—but an American, a Virginian, entitled to all the rights and privileges of a British subject. I am no more an Englishman, than Dr. Magrath may lay claim to the same character."

"This is putting the case strongly—hey, Atwood?" answered the Vice-admiral, smiling in spite of the occasion. "I am far from saying that you are an Englishman, in all senses, sir; but you are one in the sense that gives you national character and national rights. You are a subject of England."

"No, Sir Gervaise; your pardon. I am the subject of George II., but in no manner a subject of England. I am, in one sense, perhaps, a subject of the British empire; but I am not the less a Virginian, and an American. Not a shilling of any man's money will I ever touch, who expresses his contempt for either."

"You forget yourself, young man, and overlook the future. The hundred or two of prize-money, bought at the expense of your blood, in the late affair at Croix, will not last forever."

"It is gone, already, sir, every shilling of it having been sent to the widow of the boatswain who was killed at my side. I am no beggar, Sir Gervaise Oakes, though only an American. I am the owner of a plantation, which affords me a respectable independence already; and I do not serve from necessity, but from choice. Perhaps, if Sir Wycherly knew this, he would consent to omit my name. I honor and respect him; would gladly relieve his distress, either of body or mind; but I cannot consent to accept his money when offered on terms I consider humiliating."

This was said modestly, but with a warmth and sincerity which left no doubt that the speaker was in earnest. Sir Gervaise too much respected the feelings of the young man to urge the matter any further, and he turned toward the bed, in expectation of what the sick man might next say. Sir Wycherly heard and understood all that passed, and it did not fail to produce an impression, even in the state to which he was reduced. Kind-hearted, and indisposed to injure even a fly, all the natural feelings of the old man resumed their ascendency, and he would gladly have given every shilling of his funded property to be able freely to express his compunction at having uttered a syllable that could offend sensibilities so noble and generous. But this exceeded his powers, and he was fain to do the best he could in the painful situation in which he was placed.

"Noble fellow!" he stuttered out; "honor to name—come here—Sir Gervaise —bring here——"

"I believe it is the wish of Sir Wycherly, that you would draw near the bed, Mr. Wychecombe of *Virginia*," said the Vice-admiral pithily, though he extended a hand to, and smiled kindly on, the youth, as the latter passed him in the compliance.

The sick man now succeeded, with a good deal of difficulty, in drawing a valuable signet-ring from a finger. This ring bore the Wychecombe arms engraved on it. It was without the bloody hand, however; for it was far older than the order of baronets, having, as Wycherly well knew, been given by one of the Plantagenet dukes to an ancestor of the family, during the French wars of Henry VI., and that, too, in commemoration of gallantry in the field.

"Wear this—noble fellow—honor to name," said Sir Wycherly. "Must be descended—all Wychecombes descended—him——"

"I thank you, Sir Wycherly, for this present, which I prize as it ought to be prized," said Wycherly, every trace of any other feeling than that of gratitude having vanished from his countenance. "I may have no claims to your honors or money; but this ring I need not be ashamed to wear, since it was bestowed on one who was as much my ancestor as he was the ancestor of any Wychecombe in England."

"Legitimate?" cried Tom, a fierce feeling of resentment upsetting his caution and cunning.

"Yes, sir, legitimate," answered Wycherly, turning to his interrogator with the calmness of one conscious of his own truth, and with a glance of the eye that caused Tom to shrink back again into the circle. "I need no bar to enable me to use this seal, which, you may perceive, Sir Gervaise Oakes, is a *fac-simile* of the one I ordinarily wear, and which was transmitted to me from my direct ancestors."

The Vice-admiral compared the seal on Wycherly's watch-chain with that on the ring, and, the bearings being principally griffins, he was enabled to see that one was the exact counterpart of the other. Sir Reginald advanced a step, and when the Admiral had satisfied himself, he also took the two seals and compared them. As all the known branches of the Wychecombes of Wychecombe bore the same arms, namely, griffins for Wychecombe, with three battering-rams quartered, for Wycherly—he saw, at once, that the young man habitually carried about his person this proof of a common origin. Sir Reginald knew very well that arms were often assumed, as well as names, and the greater the obscurity of the individual who took these liberties, the greater was his impunity; but the seal was a very ancient one, and innovations on personal rights were far less frequent a century since, than they are to-day. Then the character and appearance of Wycherly put fraud out of the question, so far as the young lieutenant himself was concerned. Although the elder branch of the family, legitimately speaking, was reduced to the helpless old man who was now stretched upon his death-bed, his own had been extensive; and it might be that some cadet of the Wychecombes of Wychecombe-Regis had strayed into the colonies and left descendants. Secretly resolving to look more closely into these facts, he gravely returned the seals, and intimated to Sir Gervaise that the more important business before them had better proceed. On this hint, Atwood resumed the pen, and the Vice-admiral his duties.

"There want yet some £6,000 or £7,000 to make up £20,000, Sir Wycherly, which I understand is the sum you have in funds. Whose name or names will you have next inserted?"

"Rotherham—vicar—poor St. James—gone; yes—Mr.—Rotherham—vicar."

The clause was written, the sum of £1,000 was inserted, and the whole was read and approved.

"This still leaves us some £5,000 more to deal with, my dear sir."

A long pause succeeded, during which time Sir Wycherly was deliberating what to do with the rest of his ready money. At length his wandering eye rested upon the pale features of Mrs. Dutton, and, while he had a sort of liking, that proceeded from habit, for her husband, he remembered that she had many causes of sorrow. With a feeling that was creditable to his own heart, he uttered her name and the sum of £2,000. The clause was written, and accordingly read and approved.

"We have still £3,000 certainly, if not £4,000," added Sir Gervaise.

"Milly—dear little Milly—pretty Milly," stammered out the Baronet, affectionately.

"This must go into a codicil, Sir Gervaise," interrupted Atwood; "there being already one legacy in the young lady's favor. Shall it be one, two, three or four thousand pounds, Sir Wycherly, in favor of Miss Mildred, to whom you have already bequeathed £3,000."

The sick man muttered the words, "three thousand," after a short pause, adding "codicil."

His wishes were complied with, and the whole was read and approved. After this, Sir Gervaise inquired if the testator wished to make any more devises. Sir Wycherly, who had in effect bequeathed, within a few hundred pounds, all he had to bestow, bethought himself, for a few moments, of the state of his affairs, and then he signified his satisfaction with what had been done.

"As it is possible, Sir Wycherly, that you may have overlooked something," said Sir Gervaise, "and it is better that nothing should escheat to the crown, I will suggest the expediency of your making some one residuary legatee."

The poor old man smiled an assent, and then he succeeded in muttering the name of "Sir Reginald Wychecombe."

This clause, like all the others, was written, read, and approved. The will was now completed, and preparations were made to read it carefully over to the intended testator. In order that this might be done with sufficient care for future objections, the two Admirals and Atwood, who were selected for the witnesses, each read the testament himself, in order to say that nothing was laid before the testator but that which was fairly contained in the instrument, and that nothing was omitted. When all was ready, the will was audibly and slowly read to Sir Wycherly, by the secretary, from the beginning to the end. The old man listened with great attention; smiled when Mildred's name was mentioned; and clearly expressed, by signs and words, his entire satisfaction when all was ended. It remained only to place a pen in his hand, and give him such assistance as would enable him to affix his name twice: once to the body of the instrument; and, when this was duly witnessed, then again to the codicil. By this time, Tom Wychecombe thought that the moment for interposing had arrived. He had been on thorns during the whole proceeding, forming desperate resolutions to sustain the bold fraud of his legitimacy, and thus take all the lands and heirlooms of the estate, under entail; still he well knew that a subordinate but important question might arise, as between the validity of the two wills, in connection with Sir Wycherly's competency to make the last. It was material, therefore, in his view of the case, to enter a protest.

"Gentlemen," he said, advancing to the foot of the bed; "I call on you all to observe the nature of this whole transaction. My poor, beloved, but misled uncle, no longer ago than last night, was struck with a fit of apoplexy, or something so very near it as to disqualify him to judge in these matters; and here he is urged to make a will——"

"By whom, sir?" demanded Sir Gervaise, with a severity of tone that induced the speaker to fall back a step.

"Why, sir, in my judgment, by all in the room. If not with their tongues, at least with their eyes."

"And why should all in the room do this? Am I a legatee? is Admiral Bluewater to be a gainer by this will? can witnesses to a will be legatees?"

"I do not wish to dispute the matter with you, Sir Gervaise Oakes; but I solemnly protest against this irregular and most extraordinary manner of making a will. Let all who hear me remember this, and be ready to testify to it when called on in a court of justice."

Here Sir Wycherly struggled to rise in the bed, in evident excitement, gesticulating strongly to express his disgust, and his wish for his nephew to withdraw. But the physician endeavored to pacify him, while Atwood, with the paper spread on a portfolio, and a pen in readiness, coolly

proceeded to obtain the necessary signatures.

Sir Wycherly's hand trembled so much when it received the pen that for the moment writing was out of the question, and it became necessary to administer a restorative in order to strengthen his nerves.

"Away—out of sight," muttered the excited Baronet, leaving no doubt on all present, that the uppermost feeling of the moment was the strong desire to rid himself of the presence of the offensive object. "Sir Reginald—little Milly—poor servants—brothers—all the rest, stay."

"Just be calming the mind, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe," put in Magrath, "and ye'll be solacing the body by the same effort. When the mind is in a state of exaltation, the nervous system is apt to feel the influence of sympathy. By bringing the two in harmonious co-operation, the testamentary devises will have none the less validity, either in reality or in appearances."

Sir Wycherly understood the surgeon, and he struggled for self-command. He raised the pen and succeeded in getting its point on the proper place. Then his dim eye lighted, and shot a reproachful glance at Tom; he smiled in a ghastly manner, looking toward the paper, passed a hand across his brow, closed his eyes, and fell back on the pillow, utterly unconscious of all that belonged to life, its interests, its duties, or its feelings. In ten minutes he ceased to breathe.

Thus died Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, after a long life, in which general qualities of a very negative nature had been somewhat relieved by kindness of feeling, passive if not an active benevolence, and such a discharge of his responsible duties as is apt to flow from an absence of any qualities that are positively bad, as well as of many of material account, that are affirmatively good.

CHAPTER XV.

"Come ye, who still the cumbrous load of life
Push hard up hill; but at the farthest steep
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,
And hurls your labors to the valley deep."
—THOMSON.

THE sudden, and, in some measure, unlooked-for event, related in the close of the last chapter, produced a great change in the condition of things at Wychecombe Hall. The first step was to make sure that the Baronet was actually dead; a fact that Sir Gervaise Oakes, in particular, was very unwilling to believe, in the actual state of his feelings. Men often fainted, and apoplexy required three blows to kill; the sick man might still revive, and at least be able to execute his so clearly expressed intentions.

"Ye'll never have act of any sort, testamentary or matrimonial, legal or illegal, in this life, from the late Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, of Wychecombe Hall, Devonshire," coolly observed Magrath, as he collected the different medicines and instruments he had himself brought forth for the occasion. "He's far beyond the jurisdiction of my Lord High Chancelor of the college of physicians and surgeons; and therefore, ye'll be acting prudently to consider him as deceased; or, in the light in which the human body is placed by the cessation of all the animal functions."

This decided the matter, and the necessary orders were given; all but the proper attendants quitting the chamber of death. It would be far from true to say that no one lamented Sir Wycherly Wychecombe. Both Mrs. Dutton and Mildred grieved for this sudden end, and wept sincerely for his loss: though totally without a thought of its consequences to themselves.

The daughter did not even once think how near she had been to the possession of £6,000, and how unfortunately the cup of comparative affluence had been dashed from her lips; though truth compels us to avow that the mother did once recall this circumstance, with a feeling akin to re-

gret. A similar recollection had its influence on the manifestations of sorrow that flowed from others. The domestics, in particular, were too much astounded to indulge in any very abstracted grief, and Sir Gervaise and Atwood were both extremely vexed. In short, the feelings usual to such occasions were but little indulged in, though there was a strict observance of decorum.

Sir Reginald Wychecombe noted these circumstances attentively, and he took his measures accordingly. Seizing a favorable moment to consult with the two Admirals, his decision was soon made; and, within an hour after his kinsman's death, all the guests and most of the upper servants were assembled in the room which it was the usage of the house to call the library; though the books were few and seldom read. Previously, there had been a consultation between Sir Reginald and the two Admirals, to which Atwood had been admitted, *ex officio*. As everything, therefore, had been arranged in advance, there was no time lost unnecessarily, when the company was collected; the Hertfordshire Baronet coming to the point at once and that in the clearest manner.

"Gentlemen, and you, good people, domestics of the late Sir Wycherly Wychecombe," he commenced; "you are all acquainted with the unfortunate state of this household. By the recent death of its master, it is left without a head; and the deceased departing this life a bachelor, there is no child to assume his place, as the natural and legal successor. In one sense, I might be deemed the next to kin; though by a *dictum* of the common law I have no claim to the succession. Nevertheless, you all know it was the intention of our late friend to constitute me his executor, and I conceive it proper that search be made for a will, which, by being duly executed, must dispose of all in this house, and let us know who is entitled to command at this solemn and important moment. It strikes me, Sir Gervaise Oakes, that the circumstances are so peculiar as to call for prompt proceedings."

"I fully agree with you, Sir Reginald," returned the Vice-admiral; "but before we proceed any farther, I would suggest the propriety of having as many of those present as possible, who have an interest in the result. Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, the reputed nephew of the deceased, I do not see among us."

On examination, this was found to be true, and the man of Tom Wychecombe, who had been ordered by his master to be present as a spy, was immediately sent to the latter, with a request that he would attend. After a delay of two or three minutes, the fellow returned with the answer.

"Sir Thomas Wychecombe's compliments, gentlemen," he said, "and he desires to know the object of your request. He is in his room, indulging in natural grief for his recent loss; and he prefers to be left alone with his sorrows, just at this moment, if it be agreeable to you."

This was taking high ground in the commencement; and, as the man had his cue, and delivered his message with great distinctness and steadiness, the effect on the dependents of the household was very evident. Sir Reginald's face flushed, while Sir Gervaise bit his lip; Bluewater played with the hilt of his sword, very indifferent to all that was passing; while Atwood and the surgeon shrugged their shoulders and smiled. The first of these persons well knew that Tom had no shadow of a claim to the title he had been in so much haste to assume, however, and he hoped that the feebleness of his rights in all particulars, was represented by the mixed feebleness and impudence connected with this message. Determined not to be bullied from his present purpose, therefore, he turned to the servant and sent him back with a second message, that did not fail of its object. The man was directed to inform his master, that Sir Reginald Wychecombe was in possession of facts that, in his opinion, justified the course he was taking, and if "Mr. Thomas Wychecombe," did not choose to appear, in order to look after his own interests, he should proceed without him."

This brought Tom into the room, his face pale with uncertainty rather than grief, and his mind agitated with such

apprehensions as are apt to beset even the most wicked, when they take their first important step in evil. He bowed, however, to the company with an air that he intended to represent the manner of a well-bred man acknowledging his duties to respected guests.

"If I appear remiss in any of the duties of a host, gentlemen," he said, "you will overlook it, I trust, in consideration of my present feelings. Sir Wycherly was my father's elder brother, and was very dear, as he was very near to me. By this melancholy death, Sir Reginald, I am suddenly and unexpectedly elevated to be the head of our ancient and honorable family; but I know my own personal unworthiness to occupy that distinguished place, and feel how much better it would be filled by yourself. Although the law has placed a wide and impassable barrier between all of your branch of the family and ourselves, I shall ever be ready to acknowledge the affinity, and to confess that it does us quite as much honor as it bestows."

Sir Reginald, by a great effort, commanded himself so far as to return the bow, and apparently to receive the condescending admissions of the speech, with a proper degree of respect.

"Sir, I thank you," he answered, with formal courtesy; "no affinity that can be properly and legally established, will ever be disavowed by me. Under present circumstances, however, summoned as I have been to the side of his death-bed, by the late Sir Wycherly himself, and named by him, as one might say, with his dying breath, as his executor, I feel it a duty to inquire into the rights of all parties, and, if possible, to ascertain who is the successor, and consequently who has the best claim to command here."

"You surely do not attach any validity, Sir Reginald, to the pretended will that was so singularly drawn up in my dear uncle's presence, an hour before he died! Had that most extraordinary instrument been duly signed, and sealed, I cannot think that the Doctor's Commons would sustain it; but unsigned and unsealed, it is no better than so much waste paper."

"As respects real estate, sir, though so great a loser by the delay of five minutes, I am willing to admit that you are right. With regard to the personals, a question in equity—one of clearly-expressed intentions—might possibly arise; though even of that I am by no means certain."

"No, sir; no," cried Tom, a glow of triumph coloring his cheek, in spite of every effort to appear calm, "no English court would ever disturb the natural succession to the personals! I am the last man to wish to disturb some of these legacies; particularly that to Mr. Rotherham and those to the poor, faithful domestics" —Tom saw the prudence of conciliating allies, and at such a critical moment, and his declaration had an instant and strong effect, as was evident by the countenances of many of the listeners—"and I may say, that to Miss Mildred Dutton; all of which will be duly paid, precisely as if my beloved uncle had been in his right mind, and had actually made the bequests; for this mixture of reason and justice, with wild and extraordinary conceits, is by no means uncommon among men of great age, and in their last moments. However, Sir Reginald, I beg you will proceed, and act as in your judgment the extraordinary circumstances of what may be called a very peculiar case, require."

"I conceive it to be our duty, sir, to search for a will. If Sir Wycherly has actually died intestate, it will be time enough to inquire into the question of the succession at common law. I have here the keys of his private secretary; and Mr. Furlong, the land-steward, who has just arrived, and whom you see in the room, tells me Sir Wycherly was accustomed to keep all his valuable papers in this piece of furniture. I shall now proceed to open it."

"Do so, Sir Reginald; no one can have a stronger desire than myself to ascertain my beloved uncle's pleasure. Those to whom he seemed to wish to give, even, shall not be losers for the want of his name."

Tom was greatly raised in the opinions of half of the room, by this artful declaration, which was effectually securing just so many friends, in the event of any

occurrence that might render such support necessary.

In the meantime, Sir Reginald, assisted by the steward, opened the secretary, and found the deposit of papers. The leases were all in order; the title-deeds were properly arranged; the books and accounts appeared to be exactly kept; ordinary bills and receipts were filed with method; two or three bags of guineas proved that ready cash was not wanting; and, in short, everything showed that the deceased had left his affairs in perfect order, and in a very intelligible condition. Paper after paper, however, was opened, and nothing like a will, rough draft or copied, was to be found. Disappointment was strongly painted on the faces of all the gentlemen present; for they had ignorantly imbibed the opinion that the production of a will would, in some unknown manner, defeat the hopes of the *soi-disant* Sir Thomas Wychecombe. Nor was Tom, himself, altogether without concern; for, since the recent change in his uncle's feelings toward himself, he had a secret apprehension that some paper might be found to defeat all his hopes. Triumph, however, gradually assumed the place of fear, in the expression of his countenance; and when Mr. Furlong, a perfectly honest man, declared that from the late Baronet's habits, as well as from the result of this search, he did not believe that any such instrument existed, his feeling overflowed in language.

"Not so fast, Master Furlong—not so fast," he cried; "here is something that possibly even your legal acumen may be willing to term a will. You perceive, gentlemen, I have it in my possession on good authority, as it is addressed to me by name, and that, too, in Sir Wycherly's own handwriting; the envelope is sealed with his private seal. You will pronounce this to be my dear uncle's hand, Furlong," —showing the superscription of the letter —"and this to be his seal?"

"Both are genuine, gentlemen," returned the steward, with a sigh. "Thus far, Mr. Thomas is in the right."

"*Mr.* Thomas, sirrah!—and why not *Sir* Thomas? Are baronets addressed as other men, in England? But, no matter! There is a time for all things. Sir Gervaise Oakes, as you are perfectly indifferent in this affair, I ask of you the favor to break the seal, and to inquire into the contents of the paper."

The Vice-admiral was not slow in complying; for by this time he began to feel an intense interest in the result. The reader will readily understand that Tom had handed to Sir Gervaise the will drawn up by his father, and which, after inserting his reputed nephew's name, Sir Wycherly had duly executed, and delivered to the person most interested. The envelope, address, and outer seal, Tom had obtained the very day the will was signed, after assuring himself of the contents of the latter, by six or eight careful perusals. The Vice-admiral read the instrument from beginning to end, before he put it into the hands of Sir Reginald to examine. The latter fully expected to meet with a clumsy forgery; but the instant his eyes fell on the phraseology, he perceived that the will had been drawn by one expert in the law. A second look satisfied him that the hand was that of Mr. Baron Wychecombe. It has already been said, that in this instrument, Sir Wycherly bequeathed all he had on earth, to "his nephew, Thomas Wychecombe, son, etc., etc.," making his heir, also, his executor.

"This will appears to me to have been drawn up by a very skillful lawyer; the late Baron Wychecombe," observed the Baronet.

"It was, Sir Reginald," answered Tom, endeavoring to appear unconcerned. "He did it to oblige my respected uncle, leaving blanks for the name of the devisee, not liking to make a will so very decidedly in favor of his own son. The writing in the blanks is by Sir Wycherly himself, leaving no doubts of his intentions."

"I do not see but you may claim to be the heir of Wychecombe, sir, as well as of the personals; though your claims to the baronetcy shall certainly be contested and defeated."

"And why defeated?" demanded Wycherly, stepping forward for the first

time, and speaking with a curiosity he found it difficult to control. "Is not Mr. Thomas—Sir Thomas, I ought rather to say—the eldest son of the late Sir Wycherly's next brother; and, as a matter of course, heir to the title, as well as to the estate?"

"Not he, as I can answer from a careful examination of proofs. Mr. Baron Wychecombe was never married, and thus could have no heir-at-law."

"Is this possible! How have we all been deceived then, in America!"

"Why do you say this, young gentleman? Can you have any legal claims here?"

"I am Wycherly, the only son of Wycherly, who was the eldest son of Gregory, the younger brother of the late Baronet; and if what you say be true, the next in succession to the baronetcy, at least."

"This is"—Tom's words stuck in his throat: for the quiet, stern eye of the young sailor met his look and warned him to be prudent. "This is a mistake," he resumed. "My uncle Gregory was lost at sea, and died a bachelor. He can have left no lawful issue."

"I must say, young gentleman," added Sir Reginald, gravely, "that such has always been the history of his fate. I have had too near an interest in this family, to neglect its annals."

"I know, sir, that such has been the opinion here for more than half a century; but it was founded in error. The facts are simply these. My grandfather, a warm-hearted but impetuous young man, struck an older lieutenant, when ashore and on duty, in one of the West India Islands. The penalty was death; but neither the party injured, nor the commander of the vessel, wished to push matters to extremity, and the offender was advised to absent himself from the ship, at the moment of sailing. The injured party was induced to take this course, as in a previous quarrel my grandfather had received his fire, without returning it; frankly admitting his fault. The ship did sail without Mr. Gregory Wychecombe, and was lost, every soul on board perishing. My grandfather passed into Virginia, where he remained a twelvemonth, suppressing his story, lest its narration might lead to military punishment. Love next sealed his future fate. He married a woman of fortune, and though his history was well known in his own retired circle, it never spread beyond it. No one supposed him near the succession, and there was no motive for stating the fact, on account of his interests. Once he wrote to Sir Wycherly, but he suppressed the letter, as likely to give more pain than pleasure. That letter I now have, and in his own handwriting. I have also his commission, and all the other proofs of identity that such a person would be apt to possess. They are as complete as any court in Christendom would be likely to require, for he never felt a necessity for changing his name. He has been dead but two years, and previously to dying he saw that every document necessary to establish my claim, should a moment for enforcing it ever arrive, was put in such a legal form as to admit of no caviling. He outlived my own father, but none of us thought there was any motive for presenting ourselves, as all believed that the sons of Baron Wychecombe were legitimate. I can only say, sir, that I have complete legal evidence that I am heir-at-law of Gregory, the younger brother of the late Sir Wycherly Wychecombe. Whether the fact will give me any rights here, you best can say."

"It will make you heir of entail to this estate, master of this house, and of most of what it contains, and the present baronet. You have only to prove what you say, to defeat every provision of this will, with the exception of that which refers to the personal estate."

"Bravo!" cried Sir Gervaise, fairly rubbing his hands with delight. "Bravo, Dick; if we were aboard the *Plantagenet*, by the Lord, I'd turn the hands up, and have three cheers. So, then, my brave young seaman, you turn out to be Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, after all!"

"Yes, that's the way we always does on board ship," observed Galleygo, to the

group of domestics: "whenever anything of a hallooing character turns up. Sometimes we makes a signal to Admiral Blue and the rest on 'em, to 'Stand by to cheer,' and all of us sets to, to cheer as if our stomachs was full of hurrahs, and we wanted to get rid on 'em. If Sir Jarvy would just pass the word now, you'd have a taste of that 'ere custom, that would do your ears good for a twelvemonth. It's a cheering matter when one of the trade falls heir to an estate."

"And would this be a proper mode of settling a question of a right of property, Sir Gervaise Oakes?" asked Tom, with more of right and reason than he commonly had on his side; "and that, too, with my uncle lying dead beneath this roof?"

"I acknowledge the justice of the reproof, young sir, and will say no more in the matter—at least, nothing as indiscreet as my last speech. Sir Reginald, you have the affair in hand, and I recommend it to your serious attention."

"Fear nothing, Sir Gervaise," answered he of Hertfordshire. "Justice shall be done in the premises, if justice rule in England. Your story, young gentleman, is probable, and naturally told, and I see a family likeness between you and the Wychecombes, generally; a likeness that is certainly not to be traced in the person of the other claimant. Did the point depend on the legitimacy of Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, it might be easily determined, as I have his own mother's declaration to the fact of his illegitimacy, as well as of one other material circumstance that may possibly unsettle even the late Baron Wychecombe's will. But this testamentary devise of Sir Wycherly appears to be perfect, and nothing but the entail can defeat it. You speak of your proofs; where are they? It is all-important to know which party is entitled to possession."

"Here they are, sir," answered Wycherly, removing a belt from his body, and producing his papers; "not in the originals, certainly; for most of them are matters of official record, in Virginia; but in what the lawyers call 'exemplified copies,' and which I am told are in a fit state to be read as evidence in any court of England, that can take cognizance of the matter."

Sir Reginald took the papers, and began to read them, one by one, and with deep attention. The evidence of the identity of the grandfather was full, and of the clearest nature. He had been recognized as an old schoolfellow by one of the governors of the colony, and it was at this gentleman's suggestion that he had taken so much pains to perpetuate the evidence of his identity. Both the marriages, one with Jane Beverly, and the other with Rebecca Randolph, were fully substantiated, as were the two births. The personal identity of the young man, and this too as the only son of Wycherly, the eldest son of Gregory, was well certified to, and in a way that could leave no doubt as to the person meant. In a word, the proofs were such as a careful and experienced lawyer would have prepared, in a case that admitted of no doubt, and which was liable to be contested in a court of law. Sir Reginald was quite half an hour in looking over the papers; and during this time, every eye in the room was on him, watching the expression of his countenance with the utmost solicitude. At length he finished his task, when he again turned to Wycherly.

"These papers have been prepared with great method, and an acute knowledge of what might be required," he said. "Why have they been so long suppressed, and why did you permit Sir Wycherly to die in ignorance of your near affinity to him, and of your claims?"

"Of my claims I was ignorant myself, believing not only Mr. Thomas Wychecombe, but his two brothers, to stand before me. This was the opinion of my grandfather, even when he caused these proofs to be perpetuated. They were given to me, that I might claim affinity to the family on my arrival in England; and it was the injunction of my grandfather that they should be worn on my person, until the moment arrived when I could use them."

"This explains your not preferring the claim; why not prefer the relationship?"

"What for, sir? I found America and Americans looked down on, in England; colonists spoken of as a race of inferior beings—of diminished stature, feebler intellects, and a waning spirit, as compared to those from whom they had so recently sprung; and I was too proud to confess an affinity where I saw it was not desired. When wounded, and expecting to die, I was landed here at my own request, with an intention to state the facts; but, falling under the care of ministering angels"—here Wycherly glanced his eye at Mildred and her mother—"I less felt the want of relatives. Sir Wycherly I honored; but he too manifestly regarded us Americans as inferiors, to leave any wish to tell him I was his great-nephew."

"I fear we are not altogether free from this reproach, Sir Gervaise," observed Sir Reginald, thoughtfully. "We do appear to think that there is something in the air of this part of the island, that renders us better than common. Nay, if a claim come from *over water*, let it be what it may, it strikes us as a foreign and inadmissible claim. The fate from which even princes are not exempt, humbler men must certainly submit to."

"I can understand the feeling, and I think it honorable to the young man. Admiral Bluewater, you and I have had occasion often to rebuke this very spirit in our young officers; and you will agree with me when I say that this gentleman has acted naturally in acting as he has."

"I must corroborate what you say, Sir Gervaise," answered Bluewater; "and as one who has seen much of the colonies, and who is getting to be an old man, I venture to predict that this very feeling, sooner or later, will draw down upon England its own consequences, in the shape of condign punishment."

"I don't go as far as that, Dick—I don't go as far as that. But it is unwise and unsound, and we, who know both hemispheres, ought to set our faces against it. We have already some gallant fellows from that quarter of the world among us, and I hope to live to see more."

This, let it be remembered, was said before the Hallowells, and Coffins, and Brentons of our own times were enrolled in a service that has since become foreign to that of the land of their birth; but it was prophetic of their appearance, and of that of many other high names from the colonies, in the lists of the British marine. Wycherly smiled proudly, but he made no answer. All this time Sir Reginald had been musing on what had passed.

"It would seem, gentlemen," the latter now observed, "that, contrary to our belief, there is an heir to the baronetcy, as well as to the estate of Wychecombe; and all our regrets that the late incumbent did not live to execute the will we had drawn at his request, have become useless. Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, I congratulate you on thus succeeding to the honors and estates of your family; and, as a member of the last, I may be permitted to congratulate all of the name in being so worthily represented. For one of that family I cheerfully recognize you as its head and chief."

Wycherly bowed his acknowledgments receiving also the compliments of most of the others present. Tom Wychecombe, however, formed an exception, and instead of manifesting any disposition to submit to this summary disposal of his claims, he was brooding over the means of maintaining them. Detecting by the countenances of the upper servants that they were effectually bribed by his promise to pay the late Baronet's legacies, he felt tolerably confident of support from that quarter. He well knew that possession was nine points of the law, and his thoughts naturally turned toward the means necessary to securing this great advantage. As yet, the two claimants were on a par in this respect; for while the executed will might seem to give him a superior claim, no authority that was derived from an insufficient source would be deemed available in law; and Sir Wycherly had clearly no right to devise Wychecombe, so long as there existed an heir of entail. Both parties, too, were merely guests in the house; so that neither had any possession that would require a legal process to eject him. Tom had been entered at the Temple, and had some knowledge of

the law of the land, more especially as related to real estate; and he was aware that there existed some quaint ceremony of taking possession, as it existed under the feudal system; but he was ignorant of the precise forms, and had some reasonable doubts how far they would benefit him, under the peculiar circumstances of this case. On the whole, therefore, he was disposed to try the effect of timidation, by means of the advantages he clearly possessed, and of such little reason as the facts connected with his claim allowed him to offer.

"Sir Reginald Wychecombe," he said, gravely, and with as much indifference as he could assume; "you have betrayed a facility of belief in this American history that has surprised me in one with so high a reputation for prudence and caution. This sudden revival of the dead may answer for the credulous lovers of marvels, but it would hardly do for a jury of twelve sober-minded and sworn men. Admitting the whole of this gentleman's statement to be true, however, you will not deny the late Sir Wycherly's right to make a will, if he only devised his old shoes; and, having this right, that of naming his executor necessarily accompanied it. Now, sir, I am clearly that executor, and as such I demand leave to exercise my functions in this house, as its temporary master, at least."

"Not so fast—not so fast, young sir. Wills must be proved and executors qualified, before either has any validity. Then, again, Sir Wycherly could only give authority over that which was his own. The instant he ceased to breathe, his brother Gregory's grandson became the life tenant of this estate, the house included; and I advise him to assert that right, trusting to the validity of his claim, for his justification in law, should it become necessary. In these matters he who is right is safe; while he who is wrong must take the consequences of his own acts. Mr. Furlong, your stewardship ceased with the life of your principal; if you have any keys or papers to deliver, I advise your placing them in the hands of this gentleman, whom, beyond all cavil, I take to be the rightful Sir Wycherly Wychecombe."

Furlong was a cautious, clear-headed, honest man, and with every desire to see Tom defeated, he was tenacious of doing his duty. He led Sir Reginald aside, therefore, and examined him at some length, touching the nature of the proofs that had been offered; until, quite satisfied that there could be no mistake, he declared his willingness to comply with the request.

"Certainly, I hold the keys of the late Sir Wycherly's papers—those that have just been seen in the search for the will," he said, "and have every wish to place them in the hands of the proper owner. Here they are, Sir Wycherly; though I would advise you to remove the bags of gold that are in the secretary to some other place; as those your uncle had a right to bequeath to whom he saw fit. Everything else in the secretary goes with the estate; as do the plate, furniture, and other heir-looms of the Hall."

"I thank you, Mr. Furlong, and I will first use these keys to follow your advice," answered the new Baronet, "then I will return them to you with a request that you will still retain the charge of all your former duties."

This was no sooner said than done: Wycherly placing the bags of gold on the floor, until some other place of security could be provided.

"All that I legally can, Sir Wycherly, will I cheerfully do, in order to aid you in the assertion of your right; though I do not see how I can transfer more than I hold. *Qui facit per alium, facit per se,* is good law, Sir Reginald; but the principal must have power to act, before the deputy can exercise authority. It appears to me that this is a case, in which each party stands on his own rights, at his own peril. The possession of the farm is safe enough, for the time being, with the tenants; but as to the Hall and Park, there would seem to be no one in the legal occupancy. This makes a case in which title is immediately available."

"Such is the law, Mr. Furlong, and I advise Sir Wycherly to take possession of

the key of the outer door at once, as master of the tenement."

No sooner was this opinion given, than Wycherly left the room, followed by all present to the hall. Here he proceeded alone to the vestibule, locked the great door of the building, and put the key in his pocket. This act was steadily performed, and in a way to counteract, in a great degree, the effect on the domestics, of Tom's promises concerning the legacies. At the same moment, Furlong whispered something in the ear of Sir Reginald.

"Now you are quietly in possession, Sir Wycherly," said the latter, smiling, 'there is no necessity of keeping us all prisoners in order to maintain your claims. David, the usual porter, Mr. Furlong tells me, is a faithful servant, and if he will accept of the key as your agent, it may be returned to him with perfect legal safety."

As David cheerfully assented to this proposition, the key was put into his hands again, and the new Sir Wycherly was generally thought to be in possession. Nor did Tom dare to raise the contemplated question of his own legitimacy before Sir Reginald, who, he had discovered, possessed a clew to the facts; and he consequently suppressed, for the moment at least, the certificate of marriage he had so recently forged.

Bowing round to the whole company, therefore, with a sort of sarcastic compliance, he stalked off to his own room with the air of an injured man. This left our young hero in possession of the field; but, as the condition of the house was not one suitable to an unreasonable display of triumph, the party soon separated; some to consult concerning the future, some to discourse of the past, and all to wonder, more or less, at the present.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind;
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful of mind."—CHILDE HAROLD.

"WELL, Sir Jarvy," said Galleygo, following on the heels of the two Admirals, as the latter entered the dressing-room of the officer addressed; "it has turned out just as I thought; and the County of Fair-villain has come out of his hole, like a porpoise coming up to breathe, the moment our backs is turned! As soon as we gives the order to squar-away for England, and I see the old *Planter's* cabin windows turned upon France, I foreseed them consequences. Well, gentlemen, here's been a heap of prize-money made in this house without much fighting. We shall have to give the young lieutenant a leave for a few months, in order that he may take his swing ashore, here, among his brother squires!"

"Pray, sir, what may be your pleasure?" demanded Sir Gervaise; "and what the devil has brought you at my heels?"

"Why, big ships always tows small craft, your honor," returned Galleygo, simpering. "Howsever, I never comes without an errand, as everybody knows. You see, Sir Jarvy, you see, Admiral Blue, that our signal officer is ashore, with a report for us; and meeting me in the hall, he made it to me first like, that I might bring it up to you a'terwards. His news is that the French county is gone to sea, as I has just told you, gentlemen."

"Can it be possible that Bunting has brought any such tidings here! Harkee, Galleygo; desire Mr. Bunting to walk up; and then see that you behave yourself as is decent in a house of mourning."

"Aye, aye, sir. No fears of I, gentlemen. I can put on as grievous a look as the best on 'em, and if they wishes to see sorrow becomingly, and ship-shape, let them study my conduct and countenance. We has all seen dead men afore now, as we all knows. When we fou't Mounsheer Graveland (Gravelin), we had forty-seven slain, besides the hurt that lived to tell their own pain; and when we had the—"

"Go to the devil, Master Galleygo, and desire Mr. Bunting to walk upstairs," cried Sir Gervaise, impatiently.

"Aye, aye, sir. Which will your honor have done first?"

"Let me see the signal-officer, first," answered the Vice-admiral, laughing; "then be certain of executing the other order."

"Well," muttered Galleygo, as he descended the stairs, "if I was to do as you say, now, what would we do with the fleet? Ships want orders to fight; and flags wants food to give orders; and food wants stewards to be put upon the table; and stewards wants no devils to help 'em do their duty. No, no, sir, Sir Jarvy; I'll not pay that visit, till we all goes in company, as is suitable for them that has sailed so long together."

"This will be great news, Dick, if De Vervillin has really come out!" cried Sir Gervaise, rubbing his hands with delight. "Hang me, if I wait for orders from London; but we'll sail with the first wind and tide. Let them settle the quarrel at home, as best they can; it is our business to catch the Frenchman. How many ships do you really suppose the Count to have?"

"Twelve of two decks, besides one three-decker, and beating us in frigates. Two or three, however, are short vessels, and cannot be quite as heavy as our own. I see no reason why we should not engage him."

"I rejoice to hear you say so! How much more honorable is it to seek the enemy, than to be intriguing about a court! I hope you intend to let me announce that red ribbon in general orders to-morrow, Dick?"

"Never with my consent, Sir Gervaise, so long as the house of Hanover confers the boon. But what an extraordinary scene we have just had below! This young lieutenant is a noble fellow, and I hope, with all my heart, he will be enabled to make good his claim."

"Of that Sir Reginald assures me there can be no manner of doubt. His papers are in perfect order, and his story simple and probable. Do you not remember hearing, when we were midshipmen in the West Indies, of a lieutenant of the *Sappho's* striking a senior officer ashore; and of his having been probably saved from the sentence of death by the loss of the ship?"

"As well as if it were yesterday, now you name the vessel. And this you suppose to have been the late Sir Wycherly's brother. Did he belong to the *Sappho?*"

"So they tell me, below; and it leaves no doubt on my mind of the truth of the whole story."

"It is a proof, too, how easy it is for one to return to England, and maintain his rights, after an absence of more than half a century. He in Scotland has a claim quite as strong as that of this youth!"

"Dick Bluewater, you seem determined to pull a house down about your own ears! What have you or I to do with these Scotch adventurers, when a gallant enemy invites us to come out and meet him! But, mum—here is Bunting."

At this instant the signal-lieutenant of the *Plantagenet* was shown into the room, by Galleygo, in person.

"Well, Bunting, what tidings from the fleet?" demanded Sir Gervaise. "Do the ships still ride to the flood?"

"It is slack-water, Sir Gervaise, and the vessels are looking all ways at once. Most of us are clearing hawse, for there are more round turns in our cables than I remember ever to have seen in so short a time."

"That comes of there being no wind, and the uselessness of the staysails and spankers. What has brought you ashore? Galleygo tells us something of a cutter's coming in, with information that the French are out; but his news is usually galley-news."

"Not always, Sir Gervaise;" returned the lieutenant, casting a side-look at the steward, who often comforted him with ship's delicacies in the Admiral's cabin. "This time he is right, at least. The *Active* is coming in slowly, and has been signaling us all the morning. We make her out to say that Monsieur Vervillin is at sea with his whole force."

"Yes," muttered Galleygo to the Rear-admiral, in a sort of aside; "the County of Fairvillain has come out of his hole, just as I told Sir Jarvy. Fair-weather-villains they all is, and no bones broken."

"Silence! And you think, Bunting, you read the signals clearly?"

"No doubt of it, Sir Gervaise. Captain Greenly is of the same opinion, and has

sent me ashore with the news. He desired me to tell you that the ebb would make in half an hour, and that we can then fetch past the rocks to the westward, light as the wind is."

"Aye, that is Greenly, I can swear. He'll not sit down until we are all aweigh, and standing out? Does the cutter tell us which way the Count was looking?"

"To the westward, sir; on an easy bowline, and under short canvas."

"The gentleman is in no hurry, it would seem. Has he a convoy?"

"Not a sail, sir. Nineteen sail, all cruisers, and only twelve of the line. He has one two-decker, and two frigates more than we can muster; just a Frenchman's odds, sir."

"The Count has certainly with him the seven new ships that were built last season," quietly observed Bluewater, leaning back in his easy-chair, until his body inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees, and stretching a leg on an empty stand, in his usual self-indulgent manner. "They are a little heavier than their old vessels, and will give us harder work."

"The tougher the job, the more creditable the workmanship. The tide is turning, you say, Bunting?"

"It is, Sir Gervaise; and we shall all tend ebb, in twenty minutes. The frigates outside are riding down channel already. The *Chloe* seems to think that we shall be moving soon, as she has crossed top-gallant and royal-yards. Even Captain Greenly was thinking of stretching along the messenger."

"Ah! you're a set of uneasy fellows all round! You tire of your native land in twenty-four hours, I find. Well, Mr. Bunting; you can go off, and say that all is very well. This house is in a sad state of confusion, as, I presume, you know. Mention this to Captain Greenly."

"Aye, aye, sir; is it your pleasure I should tell him anything else, Sir Gervaise Oakes?"

"Why — yes, Bunting," answered the Vice-admiral, smiling. "You may as well give him a hint to get all his fresh grub off, as fast as he can, and—yes; to let no more men quit the ship on liberty."

"Anything more, Sir Gervaise?" added the pertinacious officer.

"On the whole, you may as well run up a signal to be ready to unmoor. The ships can very well ride at single anchors, when the tide has once fairly made. What say you, Bluewater?"

"A signal to unmoor, at once, would expedite matters. You know very well you intend to go to sea, and why not do the thing off-hand?"

"I dare say, now, Bunting, you too would like to give the commander-in-chief a nudge of some sort or other."

"If I could presume so far, Sir Gervaise. I can only say, sir, that the sooner we are off, the sooner we shall flog the French."

"And Master Galleygo, what are your sentiments, on this occasion? It is a full council and all ought to speak, freely."

"You knows, Sir Jarvy, that I never speaks in these matters, unless spoken to. Admiral Blue and your honor are quite enough to take care of the fleet in most circumstances, though there is some knowledge in the tops, as well as in the cabin. My ideas is, gentlemen, that, by casting to starboard on this ebb-tide, we shall have all our heads off-shore, and we shall fetch into the offing as easily as a country wench turns in a jig. What we shall do with the fleet, when we gets out, will be shown in our ultra movements."

By "ultra," David meant "ulterior," a word he had caught up from hearing dispatches read, which he understood no better than those who wrote them at the Admiralty.

"Thanks to you all, my friends!" cried Sir Gervaise, who was so delighted at the prospect of a general engagement that he felt a boyish pleasure in this fooling; "and now to business, seriously. Mr. Bunting, I would have the signal for sailing shown. Let each ship fire a recall-gun for her boats. Half an hour later, showing the bunting to unmoor; and send my boat ashore as soon as you begin to heave on the capstan. So, good morning, my fine fellow, and show your activity."

"Mr. Bunting, as you pass the *Cæsar*, do me the favor to ask for my boat, also,"

said Bluewater, lazily, but half-raising his body to look after the retiring lieutenant. "If we are to move, I suppose I shall have to go with the rest of them. Of course we shall repeat all your signals."

Sir Gervaise waited until Bunting was out of the room, when he turned to the steward, and said with some dryness of manner:

"Mr. Galleygo, you have my permission to go on board, bag and baggage."

"Yes, Sir Jarvy, I understand. We are about to get the ships under way, and good men ought to be in their places. Good-by, Admiral Blue. We shall meet before the face of the French, and then I expects every man on us will set an example to himself of courage and devotion."

"That fellow grows worse and worse, each day, and I shall have to send him forward, in order to check his impertinence," said Sir Gervaise, half-vexed and half-laughing. "I wonder you stand his saucy familiarity as well as you appear to do—with his Admiral Blues!"

"I shall take offense as soon as I find Sir Jarvy really out of humor with him. The man is brave, honest, and attached; and these are virtues that would atone for a hundred faults."

"Let the fellow go to the devil! Do you not think I had better go out, without waiting for dispatches from town?"

"It is hard to say. Your orders may send us all down into Scotland, to face Charles Stuart. Perhaps, too, they may make you a duke, and me a baron, in order to secure our fidelity!"

"The blackguards! Well, say no more of that just now. If M. de Vervillin is steering westward, he can hardly be aiming at Edinburgh, and the movements in the north."

"That is by no means so certain. Your really politic fellows usually look one way and row another."

"It is my opinion, that his object is to effect a diversion, and my wish is to give it to him to his heart's content. So long as this force is kept near the chops of the channel, it can do no harm in the north, and, in so much, must leave the road to Germany open."

"For one, I think it a pity—not to say a disgrace—that England cannot settle her own quarrels without calling in the aid of either Frenchman or Dutchman."

"We must take the world as it is, Dick, and act like two straightforward seamen, without stopping to talk politics. I take it for granted, notwithstanding your Stuart fervor, that you are willing enough to help me thrash Monsieur de Vervillin."

"Beyond a question. Nothing but the conviction that he was directly employed in serving my natural and legitimate prince could induce me to show him any favor. Still, Oakes, it is possible he may have succors for the Scotch on board, and be bound to the north by the way of the Irish channel!"

"Aye, pretty succors, truly, for an Englishman to stomach! *Mousquetaires* and *regiments de Croy*, or *de Dillon*, or some d——d French name or other; and, perhaps, beautiful muskets from the *Bois de Vincennes;* or some other infernal nest of Gallic inventions to put down the just ascendency of old England! No, no, Dick Bluewater, your excellent, loyal, true-hearted English mother never bore you to be a dupe of Bourbon perfidy and trick. I dare say she sickened at the very name of Louis!"

"I'll not answer for that, Sir Jarvy," returned the Rear-admiral, with a vacant smile; "for she passed some time at the court of *Le Grand Monarque*. But all this is idle; we know each other's opinions, and, by this time, ought to know each other's characters. Have you digested any plan for your future operations; and what part am I to play in it?"

Sir Gervaise paced the room, with hands folded behind his back, in an air of deep contemplation, for quite five minutes before he answered. All this time, Bluewater remained watching his countenance and movements, in anticipation of what was to come. At length, the Vice-admiral appeared to have made up his mind, and he delivered himself of his decision as follows:

"I have reflected on them, Dick," he said, "even while my thoughts have seemed to be occupied with the concerns of others. If De Vervillin is out, he must still be to

the eastward of us; for running as the tides do on the French coast, he can hardly have made much westing with this light southwest wind. We are yet uncertain of his destination, and it is all-important that we get immediate sight of him, and keep him in view until he can be brought to action. Now, my plan is this. I will send out the ships in succession, with orders to keep on an easy bowline, until each reaches the chops of the channel, when she is to go about and stand in toward the English coast. Each succeeding vessel, however, will weigh as soon as her leader is hull down, and keep within signal distance, in order to send intelligence through the whole line. Nothing will be easier than to keep in sight of each other, in such fine weather; and by these means we shall spread a wide clew—quite a hundred miles—and command the whole of the channel. As soon as Monsieur de Vervillin is made, the fleet can close, when we will be governed by circumstances. Should we see nothing of the French, by the time we make their coast, we may be certain they have gone up channel; and then, a signal from the van can reverse the order of sailing, and we will chase to the eastward, closing to a line abreast as fast as possible."

"All this is very well, certainly; and by means of the frigates and smaller cruisers we can easily sweep a hundred and fifty miles of ocean; nevertheless, the fleet will be much scattered."

"You do not think there will be any danger of the French's engaging the van, before the rear can close to aid it?" asked Sir Gervaise, with interest, for he had the profoundest respect for his friend's professional opinions. "I intended to lead out in the *Plantagenet*, myself, and to have five or six of the fastest ships next to me, with a view that we might keep off, until you could bring up the rear. If they chase, you know we can retire."

"Beyond a doubt, if Sir Gervaise Oakes can make up his mind to retire, before any Frenchman who was ever born," returned Bluewater, laughing. "All this sounds well; but, in the event of a meeting, I should expect to find you, with the whole van dismasted, fighting your hulks like bull-dogs, and keeping the Count at bay, leaving the glory of covering your retreat to me."

"No, no, Dick; I'll give you my honor I'll do nothing so boyish and silly. I'm a different man at fifty-five, from what I was at twenty-five. You may be certain that I will run, until I think myself strong enough to fight."

"Will you allow me to make a suggestion, Admiral Oakes; and this with all the frankness that ought to characterize our ancient friendship?"

Sir Gervaise stopped short in his walk, looked Bluewater steadily in the face, and nodded his head.

"I understand by the expression of your countenance," continued the other, "that I am expected to speak. I had no more to say, than to make the simple suggestion that your plan would be most likely to be executed, were I to lead the van, and were *you* to bring up the rear."

"The devil you do! This comes as near mutiny—or *scandalum magnatum*—as one can wish! And why do you suppose that the plan of the commander-in-chief will be least in danger of failing, if Admiral Bluewater lead on this occasion, instead of Admiral Oakes?"

"Merely because I think Admiral Oakes, when an enemy is pressing him, is more apt to take counsel of his heart than of his head; while Admiral Bluewater is *not*. You do not know yourself, Sir Jarvy, if you think it so easy a matter to run away."

"I've spoiled you, Dick, by praising your foolish maneuvering so much before your face, and that's the whole truth of the matter. No—my mind is made up; and I believe you know me well enough to feel sure, when that is the case, even a council of war could not move it. I lead out in the first two-decked ship that lifts her anchor, and you follow in the last. You understand my plan, and will see it executed, as you see everything executed, in the face of the enemy."

Admiral Bluewater smiled, and not altogether without irony in his manner; though he managed, at the same time,

to get the leg that had been lowest for the last five minutes, raised by an ingenuity peculiar to himself, several inches above its fellow.

"Nature never made you for a conspirator, Oakes," he said, as soon as this change was effected to his mind; "for you carry a top-light in your breast that even the blind can see!"

"What crotchet is uppermost in your mind now, Dick? Aren't the orders plain enough to suit you?"

"I confess it—as well as the motive for giving them just in this form."

"Let's have it, at once. I prefer a full broadside to your minute guns. What is my motive?"

"Simply that you, Sir Jarvy, say to a certain Sir Gervaise Oakes, Bart., Vice-Admiral of the Red, and Member for Bowldero, in your own mind, 'Now, if I can just leave that fellow, Dick Bluewater, behind me, with four or five ships, he'll never desert me, when in front of the enemy, whatever he might do to King George; and so I'll make sure of him by placing the question in such a light that it shall be one of friendship, rather than one of loyalty.'"

Sir Gervaise colored to the temples, for the other had penetrated into his most secret thoughts; and yet, in spite of his momentary vexation, he faced his accuser, and both laughed in the heart-felt manner that the circumstance would be likely to excite.

"Harkee, Dick," said the Vice-admiral, as soon as he could command sufficient gravity to speak; "they made a mistake when they sent you to sea; you ought to have been apprenticed to a conjurer. I care not what you think about it; my orders are given, and they must be obeyed. Have you a clear perception of the plan?"

"One quite as clear, I tell you, as I have of the motive."

"Enough of this, Bluewater; we have serious duties before us."

Sir Gervaise now entered more at length into his scheme; explaining to his friend all his wishes and hopes, and letting him know, with official minuteness, what was expected at his hands. The Rear-admiral listened with his accustomed respect, whenever anything grave was in discussion between them; and, had any one entered while they were thus engaged, he would have seen in the manner of one, nothing but the dignified frankness of a friendly superior, and in the other, the deference which a naval inferior usually pays to rank. As he concluded, Sir Gervaise rang his bell, and desired the presence of Sir Wycherly Wychecombe.

"I could have wished to remain and see this battle for the succession fairly fought," he said; "but a battle of a different sort calls us in another quarter. Show him in," he added, as his man intimated that the young baronet was in waiting.

"What between the duties of our professional stations, and those of guest to the host," said the Vice-admiral, rising and bowing to the young man, "it is not easy to settle the question of etiquette between us, Sir Wycherly; and I have from habit, thought more of the admiral and the lieutenant, than of the lord of the manor and his obliged guests. If I have erred, you will excuse me."

"My new situation is so very novel, that I still remain all sailor, Sir Gervaise," answered the other smiling; "as such I hope you will ever consider me. Can I be of any service here?"

"One of our cutters has just come in with news that will take the fleet to sea again, this morning; or as soon as the tide begins to run a strong ebb. The French are out, and we must go and look for them. It was my intention and my hope to be able to take you to sea with me in the *Plantagenet*. The date of your commission would not put you very high among her lieutenants, but Bunting deserves a first lieutenancy, and I meant to give it to him this afternoon, in which case there would be a vacancy in the situation of my own signal-officer, a duty you could well perform. As it is, you ought not to quit this house, and I must take my leave of you with regret it is so."

"Admiral Oakes, what is there that ought to keep one of my station ashore, on the eve of a general battle? I sincerely hope and trust you will alter the

last determination, and return to the first."

"You forget your own important interests; remember that possession is nine points of the law."

"We had heard the news below, and Sir Reginald, Mr. Furlong, and myself, were discussing the matter when I received your summons. These gentlemen tell me that possession can be held by deputy, as well as in person. I am satisfied we can dispose of this objection."

"Your grandfather's brother, and the late head of your family, lies dead in his house; it is proper his successor should be present at his funeral obsequies."

"We thought of that, also. Sir Reginald has kindly offered to appear in my place; and then there is the chance that the meeting with Monsieur de Vervillin will take place within the next eight-and-forty hours; whereas, my uncle cannot be interred certainly for a week or ten days."

"I see you have well calculated all the chances, young sir," said Sir Gervaise, smiling. "Bluewater, how does this matter strike you?"

"Leave it in my hands, and I will see to it. You will sail near or quite twenty-four hours before me, and there will be time for more reflection. Sir Wycherly can remain with me in the *Cæsar*, in the action; or he can be thrown aboard the *Plantagenet* when we meet."

After a little reflection, Sir Gervaise, who liked to give every one a fair chance, consented to the arrangement, and it was decided that Wycherly should come out in the *Cæsar*, if nothing occurred to render the step improper.

This arrangement completed, the Vice-admiral declared he was ready to quit the Hall. Galleygo and the other servants had already made the dispositions necessary for embarking, and it only remained to take leave of the inmates of the dwelling. The parting between the baronets was friendly; for the common interest they felt in the success of Wycherly, had, in a degree, rendered them intimates, and much disposed Sir Reginald to overlook the sailor's well-known whiggery. Dutton and the ladies took their departure at the same time, and what passed between them and Sir Gervaise on this occasion took place on the road to the headland, whither all parties proceeded on foot.

A person so important as Sir Gervaise Oakes did not leave the roof that had sheltered him, to embark on board his own ship, without a due escort to the shore. Bluewater accompanied him, in order to discuss any little point of duty that might occur to the mind of either, at the last moment; and Wycherly was of the group, partly from professional feeling, and more from a desire to be near Mildred. Then there were Atwood, and the surgeons, Mr. Rotherham, and two or three of the cabin attendants. Lord Geoffrey, too, strolled along with the rest, though it was understood that his own ship would not sail that day.

Just as the party issued from the gate of the park into the street of the hamlet, a heavy gun was fired from the fleet. It was soon succeeded by others, and whiffs and cornets were seen flying from the masthead that rose above the opening in the cliffs, the signals of recall for all boats. This set every one in motion, and never within the memory of man had Wychecombe presented such a scene of confusion and activity. Half-intoxicated seamen were driven down to the boats, by youngsters with the cloth diamond in their collars, like swine, who were reluctant to go, and yet afraid to stay. Quarters of beeves were trundled along in carts or burrows, and were soon seen swinging at different mainstays; while the gathering of eggs, butter, poultry, mutton, lamb, and veal, menaced the surrounding country with a scarcity.

Through this throng of the living and the dead, our party held its way, jostled by the eager countrymen and respectfully avoided by all who belonged to the fleet, until it reached the point where the roads to the cliffs and the landing separated, when the Vice-admiral turned to the only midshipman present, and courteously lifting his hat, as if reluctant to impose such a duty on a "young gentleman," on liberty, he said:

"Do me the favor, Lord Geoffrey, to step down to the landing, and ascertain if my barge is there? The officer of the boat will find me at the signal-station."

The boy cheerfully complied; and this son of an English duke, who, by the death of an elder brother, became in time a duke himself, went on a service, that among gentlemen of the land would be deemed nearly menial, with as much alacrity as if he felt honored by the request. It was by a training like this, that England came in time to possess a marine that has achieved so many memorable deeds; since it taught those who were destined to command, the high and useful lesson how to obey.

While the midshipman was gone to look for the boat, the two Admirals walked the cliff, side by side, discussing their future movements; and when all was ready, Sir Gervaise descended to the shore, using the very path by which he had ascended the previous day; and, pushing through the throng that crowded the landing, almost too much engaged to heed even his approach, he entered his barge. In another minute, the measured strokes of the oars urged him swiftly toward the *Plantagenet*.

CHAPTER XVII.

"'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increased at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have looked a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind;
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky showed it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so."

—BYRON.

As it was just past the turn of the day, Bluewater determined to linger on the cliffs for several hours, or until it was time to think of his dinner. Abstracted as his thoughts were habitually, his mind found occupation and pleasure in witnessing the evolutions that succeeded among the ships; some of which evolutions it may be well now briefly to relate.

Sir Gervaise Oakes' foot had not been on the deck of the *Plantagenet* five minutes before a signal for all commanders was flying at that vessel's masthead. In ten minutes more every captain of the fleet, with the exception of those belonging to the vessels in the offing, were in the flag-ship's cabin, listening to the intentions and instructions of the Vice-admiral.

"My plan of sailing, gentlemen, is easily comprehended," continued the commander-in-chief, after he had explained his general intentions to chase and engage; "and every one of you will implicitly follow it. We have the tide strong at ebb, and a good six-knot breeze is coming up at southwest. I shall weigh, with my yards square, and keep them so, until the ship has drawn out of the fleet, and then I shall luff up on a taut bowline and on the starboard tack, bringing the ebb well under my lee-bow. This will hawse the ship over toward Morlaix, and bring us as far to windward as desirable. While the ebb lasts, and this breeze stands, we shall have plain sailing; the difficulty will come on the flood, or with a shift of wind. The ships that come out last must be careful to keep their seconds, ahead and astern, in plain sight, and regulate their movements, as much as they can, by the leading vessels. The object is to spread as wide a clew as possible, while we hold the ships within signal distance of each other. Toward sunset I shall shorten sail, and the line will close up within a league from vessel to vessel, and I have told Bluewater to use his discretion about coming out with the last ships, though I have requested him to hold on as long as he shall deem it prudent, in the hope of receiving another express from the Admiralty. When the flood makes, I do not intend to go about, but shall continue on the starboard tack, and I wish you all to do the same. This will bring the leading vessels considerably to windward of those astern, and may possibly throw the fleet into a bow and quarter line. Being in the van, it will fall to my duty to look to this, and to watch for the consequences. But I ask of you to keep an eye on the weather, and hold your ships within signal distance of each other. If it come

on thick, or to blow very hard, we must close from van to rear, and try our luck, in a search in compact order. Let the man who first sees the enemy, make himself heard at once, and send the news, with the bearings of the French, both ahead and astern, as fast as possible. In that case, you will all close on the point from which the intelligence comes; and, mark me, no cruising to get to windward, in your own fashions, as if you sailed with roving commissions. You know I'll not stand that! And now, gentlemen, it is probable that we shall all never meet again. God bless you! Come and shake hands with me, one by one, and then to your boats, for the lieutenant has just sent Greenly word that we are up and down. Let him trip, Greenly, and be off as soon as we can."

The leave-taking, a scene in which joyousness and sadness were strangely mingled, succeeded, and then the captains disappeared. From that moment every mind was bent on sailing.

Although Bluewater did not witness the scene in the *Plantagenet's* cabin, he pictured it, in his mind's eye, and remained on the cliffs to watch the succeeding movements. As Wycherly disappeared in the house, and Dutton clung to his flag-staff, the Rear-admiral had no one but Lord Geoffrey for a companion. The latter perceiving that his relation did not seem disposed to converse, had the tact to be silent himself; a task that was less difficult than common, on account of the interest he felt in the spectacle.

The boats of the different captains were still shoving off from the starboard side of the *Plantagenet*, whither etiquette had brought them together, in a little crowd, when her three topsails fell, and their sheets steadily drew the clews toward the ends of the lower yards. Even while this was in progress, the yards began to ascend, and rose with that steady but graduated movement which marks the operation in a man-of-war. All three were fairly mastheaded in two minutes. As the wind struck the canvas obliquely, the sails filled as they opened their folds, and, by the time their surfaces were flattened by distention, the *Plantagenet* steadily moved from her late berth, advancing slowly against a strong tide, out of the group of ships among which she had been anchored. This was a beautiful evolution, resembling that of a sea-fowl, which lazily rises on its element, spreads its wings, emerges from the water, and glides away to some distant and unseen point.

The movement of the flag-ship was stately, measured, and grand. For five minutes she held her way nearly due east, with the wind on her starboard quarter, meeting the tide in a direct line; until, having drawn sufficiently ahead of the fleet, she let fall her courses, sheeted home top-gallant-sails and royals, set her spanker, jibs, and mainsails, and braced up sharp on a wind, with her head at south-southeast. This brought the tide under her lee-fore-chains, and set her rapidly off the land and to windward. As she trimmed her sails, and steadied her bowlines, she fired a gun, made the numbers of the vessels in the offing to weigh, and to pass within hail. And this did Bluewater note, with the attention of an amateur, as well as the critical analysis of a connoisseur.

"Very handsomely done, Master Geoffrey—very handsomely done, it must be allowed! Never did a bird quit a flock with less fuss, or more beautifully, than the *Plantagenet* has drawn out of the fleet. It must be admitted that Greenly knows how to handle his ship."

"I fancy Captain Stowel would have done quite as well with the *Cæsar*, sir," answered the boy, with a proper esprit-de-*ship*. "Don't you remember, Admiral Bluewater, the time when he got under way off L'Orient, with the wind blowing a gale directly on shore? Even Sir Gervaise said, afterward, that we lost less ground than any ship in the fleet, and yet the *Plantagenet* is the most weatherly two-decker in the navy; as everybody says."

"Everybody! She is certainly a weatherly vessel, but not more so than several others. Whom did you ever hear give that character to this particular ship?"

"Why, sir, her reefers are always brag-

ging as much as that; and a great deal more, too."

"Her reefers! Young gentlemen are particularly struck with the charms of their first loves, both ashore and afloat, my boy. Did you ever hear an old seaman say that much for the *Plantagenet?*"

"I think I have, sir," returned Lord Geoffrey, blushing. "Galleygo, Sir Gervaise's steward, is commonly repeating some such stuff, or other. They are furious braggarts, the Plantagenets, all round, sir."

"That comes honestly," answered Bluewater, smiling, "her namesakes and predecessors of old having some such characteristic, too. Look at that ship's yards, boy, and learn how to trim a vessel's sails on a wind. The pencil of a painter could not draw lines more accurate!"

"Captain Stowel tells us, sir, that the yards ought not to be braced in exactly alike; but that we ought to check the weather-braces a little, as we go aloft, so that the topsail-yard should point a little less forward than the lower yard, and the top-gallant than the topsail."

"You are quite right in taking Stowel's opinion in all such matters, Geoffrey; but has not Captain Greenly done the same thing in the *Plantagenet?* When I speak of symmetry, I mean the symmetry of a seaman."

The boy was silenced, though exceedingly reluctant to admit that any ship could equal his own. In the meantime, there was every appearance of a change in the weather. Just about the time the *Plantagenet* braced up, the wind freshened, and in ten minutes it blew a stiff breeze. Some time before the Admiral spoke the vessels outside, he was compelled to take in all his light canvas; and when he filled again, after giving his orders to the frigate and sloop, the top-gallant sheets were let fly, a single reef was taken in the topsails, and the lighter sails were set over them. This change in the weather, more especially as the night threatened to be clouded, if not absolutely dark, would necessarily bring about a corresponding change in the plan of sailing, reducing the intervals between the departures of the vessels quite one-half. To such vicissitudes are all maritime operations liable, and it is fortunate when there is sufficient capacity in the leaders to remedy them.

In less than an hour, the *Plantagenet's* hull began to sink, to those on a level with it, when the *Carnatic* tripped her anchor, opened her canvas, shot out of the fleet, hauled by the wind, and followed in the Admiral's wake. So accurate was the course she steered, that, half an hour after she had braced up, a hawse-bucket, which had been dropped from the *Plantagenet*, in hauling water, was picked up. We may add, here, though it will be a little anticipating events, that the *Thunderer* followed the *Carnatic;* the *Blenheim* the *Thunderer;* the *Achilles* the *Blenheim;* the *Warspite the Achilles;* the *Dover* the *Warspite;* the *York* the *Dover;* the *Elizabeth* the *York;* the *Dublin* the *Elizabeth;* and the *Cæsar* the *Dublin*. But hours passed before all these ships were in motion, and hours in which we shall have some occurrences to relate that took place on shore. Still it will aid the reader in better understanding the future incidents of our tale, if we describe, at once, some of the circumstances under which all these ships got in motion.

By the time the *Plantagenet's* topsails were beginning to dip from the cliffs, the *Carnatic*, the *Thunderer*, the *Blenheim*, the *Achilles*, and the *Warspite* were all stretching out in line, with intervals of quite two leagues between them, under as much canvas as they could now bear. The Admiral had shortened sail the most, and was evidently allowing the *Carnatic* to close, most probably on account of the threatening look of the sky, to windward; while he was suffering the frigate and sloop, the *Chloe* and *Driver*, to pass ahead of him, the one on his weather, and the other on his lee bow. When the *Dover* weighed, the Admiral's upper sail was not visible from her tops, though the *Warspite's* hull had not yet disappeared from her deck. She left the fleet, or the portions of it that still remained at anchor, with her fore-course set, and hauled by

the wind, under double-reefed topsails, a single reef in her mainsail, and with her main-topgallant sail set over its proper sail. With this reduced canvas, she started away on the track of her consorts, the brine foaming under her bows, and with a heel that denoted the heavy pressure that bore on her sails. By this time the *York* was aweigh, the tide had turned, and it became necessary to fill on the other tack in order to clear the land to the eastward. This altered the formation, but we will now revert to the events as they transpired on the shore, with a view to relate them more in their regular order.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Bluewater must have remained on or about the cliffs several hours, in order to witness the departure of so many of the vessels. Instead of returning to the Hall at the dinner hour, agreeably to promise, he profited by the appearance of Wycherly, who left the cottage with a flushed, agitated manner, just as he was thinking of the necessity of sending a message to Sir Reginald, and begged the young man to be the bearer of his excuses. He thought that the change in the weather rendered it necessary for him to remain in sight of the sea. Dutton overheard this message, and, after a private conference with his wife, he ventured to invite his superior to appease his appetite under his own humble roof. To this Bluewater cheerfully assented; and when the summons came to the table, to his great joy he found that his only companion was to be Mildred, who, like himself, for some reason known only to her own bosom, had let the ordinary dining hour pass without appearing at table, but whom her mother had now directed to take some sustenance.

"The late events at the Hall have agitated the poor child, sir," said Mrs. Dutton, in the way of apology, "and she has not tasted food since morning. I have told her you would excuse the intrusion, and receive her carving and attentions as an excuse for her company."

Bluewater looked at the pallid countenance of the girl, and never before had he found the resemblance to Agnes Hedworth so strong as at that moment. The last year or two of his own sweet friend's life had been far from happy, and the languid look and tearful eyes of Mildred revived the recollection of the dead with painful distinctness.

"Good God!" he murmured to himself; "that two such beings should exist only to suffer! my good Mrs. Dutton. make no excuses; but believe me when I say that you could not have found in England another that would have proved as welcome as my present little messmate."

Mildred struggled for a smile; and she did succeed in looking extremely grateful. Beyond this, however, it exceeded her powers to go. Mrs. Dutton was gratified, and soon left the two to partake of their neat, but simple meal, by themselves: household duties requiring her presence elsewhere.

"Let me persuade you to take a glass of this really excellent port, my child," said Bluewater. "If you had cruised so long as I have done, on the coast of Portugal, you would know how to value a liquor as pure as this. I don't know of an admiral that has as good!"

"It is probably our last, sir," answered Mildred, shaking a tear from each of her long dark lashes, by an involuntary trembling motion as she spoke. "It was a present from dear, old Sir Wycherly, who never left my mother wholly unsupplied with such plain delicacies as he fancied poverty placed beyond our reach. The wine we can easily forget; not so easily the donor."

Bluewater felt as if he could draw a check for one-half the fortune he had devised to his companion; and yet, by a caprice of feeling that is not uncommon to persons of the livest susceptibility, he answered in a way to smother his own emotion.

"There will not soon be another old Sir Wycherly to make his neighbors comfortable; but there is a young one, who is not likely to forget his uncle's good example. I hope you all, here, rejoice at the sudden rise in fortune that has so unexpectedly been placed within the reach of our favorite lieutenant?"

A look of anguish passed over Mildred's face, and her companion noted it; though surprise and pity—not to say resentment—prevented his betraying his discovery.

"We endeavor to be glad, sir," answered Mildred, smiling in so suffering a manner as to awaken all her companion's sympathies; "but it is not easy for us to rejoice at anything which is gained by the loss of our former valued friend."

"I am aware that a young fellow, like the present Sir Wycherly, can be no substitute for an old fellow like the last Sir Wycherly, my dear; but as one is a sailor, and the other was only a landsman, my professional prejudices may not consider the disparity as great as it may possibly appear to be to your less partial judgment."

Bluewater thought the glance he received was imploring, and he instantly regretted that he had taken such means to divert his companion's sadness. Some consciousness of this regret probably passed through Mildred's mind, for she rallied her spirits and made a partially successful effort to be a more agreeable companion.

"My father thinks, sir," she said, "that our late pleasant weather is about to desert us, and that it is likely to blow heavily before six-and-thirty hours are over."

"I am afraid Mr. Dutton will prove to be too accurate an almanac. The weather has a breeding look, and I expect a dirty night. Good or bad, we seamen must face it, and that, too, in the narrow seas, where gales of wind are no gales of Araby."

"Ah, sir, it is a terrible life to lead! By living on this cliff, I have learned to pity the sailor."

"Perhaps, my child, you pity us when we are the most happy. Nine seamen in ten prefer a respectable gale to a flat calm. There are moments when the ocean is terrific; but, on the whole, it is capricious, rather than malignant. The night that is before us promises to be just such a one as Sir Gervaise Oakes delights in. He is never happier than when he hears a gale howling through the cordage of his ship."

"I have heard him spoken of as a very daring and self-relying commander. But you cannot entertain such feelings, Admiral Bluewater; for to me you seem better fitted for a fireside, well filled with friends and relatives, than for the conflicts and hardships of the sea."

Mildred had no difficulty now in forcing a smile, for the sweet one she bestowed on the veteran almost tempted him to rise and fold her in his arms, as a parent would wrap a beloved daughter to his heart. Discretion, however, prevented a betrayal of feelings that might have been misinterpreted, and he answered in his original vein.

"I fear I am a wolf in sheep's clothing," he said; "while Oakes admits the happiness he feels in seeing his ship plowing through a raging sea, in a dark night, he maintains that my rapture is sought in a hurricane. I do not plead guilty to the accusation, but I will allow there is a sort of fierce delight in participating, as it might be, in a wild strife of the elements. To me, my very nature seems changed at such moments, and I forget all that is mild and gentle. That comes of having lived so much estranged from your sex, my dear; desolate bachelor, as I am."

"Do you think sailors ought to marry?" asked Mildred, with a steadiness that surprised herself; for, while she put the question, consciousness brought the blood to her temples.

"I should be sorry to condemn a whole profession, and that one I so well love, to the hopeless misery of single life. There are miseries peculiar to the wedded lives of both soldiers and sailors; but are there not miseries peculiar to those who never separate? I have heard seamen say—men, too, who loved their wives and families—that they believed the extreme pleasure of meetings after long separations, the delights of hope, and the zest of excited feelings have rendered their years of active service more replete with agreeable sensations, than the stagnant periods of peace. Never having been married myself, I can only speak on report."

"Ah! this may be so with men; but

surely, surely women never can feel thus!"

"I suppose, a sailor's daughter yourself, you know Jack's account of his wife's domestic creed! 'A good fire, a clean hearth, the children abed, and the husband at sea,' is supposed to be the climax of felicity."

"This may do for the sailor's jokes, Admiral Bluewater," answered Mildred, smiling; "but it will hardly ease a breaking heart. I fear from all I have heard this afternoon, and from the sudden sailing of the ships, that a great battle is at hand."

"And why should you, a British officer's daughter, dread that? Have you so little faith in us as to suppose a battle will necessarily bring defeat! I have seen much of my own profession, Miss Dutton, and trust I am in some small degree above the rhodomontade of the braggarts; but it is not usual for us to meet the enemy, and to give those on shore reason to be ashamed of the English flag. It has never yet been my luck to meet a Frenchman who did not manifest a manly desire to do his country credit; and I have always felt that we must fight hard for him before we could get him; nor has the result ever disappointed me. Still, fortune or skill, or right is commonly on our side and has given us the advantage in the end."

"And to which, sir, do you ascribe a success at sea so very uniform?"

"As a Protestant, I ought to say to our religion; but this my own knowledge of Protestant vices rejects. Then to say fortune would be an exceeding self-abasement—one, that between us, is not needed—and I believe I must impute it to skill. As plain seamen, I do believe we are more expert than most of our neighbors; though I am far from being positive we have any great advantage over them in tactics. If any, the Dutch are our equals."

"Notwithstanding, you are quite certain of success. It must be a great encouragement to enter into the fight with a strong confidence in victory! I suppose—that is, it seems to me—it is a matter of course, sir—that our new Sir Wycherly will not be able to join in the battle, this time?"

Mildred spoke timidly, and she endeavored to seem unconcerned; but Bluewater read her whole heart, and pitied the pain which she had inflicted on herself, in asking the question. It struck him, too, that a girl of his companion's delicacy and sensibility would not thus advert to the young man's movements at all, if the latter had done aught justly to awaken censure: and this conviction greatly relieved his mind as to the effect of sudden elevation on the handsome lieutenant. As it was necessary to answer, however, lest Mildred might detect his consciousness of her feelings, not a moment was lost before making a reply.

"It is not an easy matter to prevent a young, dashing sailor, like this Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, from doing his part in a general engagement, and that, too, of the character of the one to which we are looking forward," he said. "Oakes has left the matter in my hands; I suppose I shall have to grant the young man's request."

"He has then requested to be received in your ship?" asked Mildred, her hand shaking as she used the spoon it held.

"That of course. No one who wears the uniform could or would do less. It seems a ticklish moment for him to quit Wychecombe, too; where I fancy he will have a battle of his own to fight ere long; but professional feeling will overshadow all others, in young men. Among us seamen, it is said to be even stronger than love."

Mildred made no answer; but her pale cheek and quivering lips, evidences of feeling that her artlessness did not enable her to conceal, caused Bluewater again to regret the remark. With a view to restore the poor girl to her self-command, he changed the subject of conversation, which did not again advert to Wycherly.

The remainder of the meal was consequently eaten in peace, the Admiral manifesting to the last, however, the sudden and generous interest he had taken in the character and welfare of his companion. When they rose from table, Mildred joined

her mother, and Bluewater walked out upon the cliffs again.

It was now evening, and the waste of water that lay stretched before the eye, though the softness of summer was shed upon it, had the wild and dreary aspect that the winds and waves lend to a view, as the light of day is about to abandon the ocean to the gloom of night. All this had no effect on Bluewater, however, who knew that two-decked ships, strongly manned, with their heavy canvas reduced, would make light work of worrying through hours of darkness that menaced no more than these. Still the wind had freshened, and when he stood on the verge of the cliff, sustained by the breeze which pressed him back from the precipice, rendering his head more steady and his footing sure, the *Elizabeth* was casting, under close-reefed topsails, and two reefs in their courses, with a heavy staysail or two, to raise her helm. He saw that the ponderous machine would stagger under even this short canvas, and that her captain had made his dispositions for a windy night. The lights that the *Dover* and the *York* carried in their tops were just beginning to be visible in the gathering gloom, the last about a league and a half down channel, the ship standing in that direction to get to windward, and the former more to the southward, the vessel having already tacked to follow the Admiral. A chain of lights connected the whole of the long line, and placed the means of communication in the power of the captains. At this moment the *Plantagenet* was fully fifty miles at sea, plowing through a heavy southwest swell, which the wind was driving into the chops of the channel, from the direction of the Bay of Biscay, and the broad Atlantic.

Bluewater buttoned his coat and he felt his frame invigorated by a gale that came over his person, loaded by the peculiar flavor of the sea. But two of the heavy ships remained at their anchors, the *Dublin* and the *Cæsar;* and his experienced eye could see that Stowel had everything on board the latter ready to trip and be off, as soon as he, himself, should give the order. At this moment, the midshipman, who had been absent for hours, returned and stood again at his side.

"Our turn will soon come, sir," said the gallant boy, "and for one I shall not be sorry to be in motion. Those chaps on board the *Plantagenet* will swagger like so many Dons, if they should happen to get a broadside at Monsieur de Vervillin while we are lying here, under the shore, like a gentleman's yacht hauled into a bay, that the ladies might eat without disturbing their stomachs."

"Little fear of that, Geoffrey. The *Active* is too light of foot, especially in the weather we have had, to suffer heavy ships to be so close on her heels. She must have had some fifteen or twenty miles the start, and the French have been compelled to double Cape la Hogue and Alderney, before they could even look this way. If coming down channel at all, they are fully fifty miles to the eastward; and should our van stretch far enough by morning to head them off, it will bring us handsomely to the windward. Sir Gervaise never set a better trap than he has done this very day. The *Elizabeth* has her hands full, boy, and the wind seems to be getting scant for her. If it knock her off much more, it will bring the flood on her weather-bow, and compel her to tack. This will throw the rear of our line into confusion!"

"What should we do, sir, in such a case? It would never answer to leave poor Sir Jarvy out there, by himself!"

"We would try not to do that!" returned Bluewater, smiling at the affectionate solicitude of the lad, a solicitude that caused him slightly to forget his habitual respect for the commander-in-chief, and to adopt the sobriquet of the fleet. "In such a case, it would become my duty to collect as many ships as I could, and to make the best of our way toward the place where we might hope to fall in with the others, in the morning. There is little danger of losing each other, for any length of time, in these narrow waters, and I have few apprehensions of the French being far enough west to fall in with our leading vessels before morning. If they should, indeed, Geoffrey—"

"Ah, sir, if they should, I know well enough what would come to pass!"

"What, boy? On the supposition that Monsieur de Vervillin did meet with Sir Gervaise by daybreak, what, in your experienced eyes, seem most likely to be the consequences?"

"Why, sir, Sir Jarvy would go at 'em like a dolphin at a flying fish; and if he should really happen to catch one or two of 'em, there'd be no sailing in company with the Plantagenets, for us Cæsars! When we had the last bout with Monsieur de Gravelin, they were as saucy as peacocks, because we didn't close until their fore-yard and mizzen-topgallant-mast were gone, although the shift of wind brought us dead to leeward, and after all, we had eleven men the most hurt in the fight. You don't know them Plantagenets, sir; for they never dare say anything before you!"

"Not to the discredit of my young Cæsars, I'll answer for it. Yet, you'll remember Sir Gervaise gave us full credit, in his dispatches."

"Yes, sir, all very true. Sir Gervaise knows better; and then he understands what the *Cæsar* is, and what she can do and has done. But it's a very different matter with the youngsters, who fancy, because they carry a red flag at the fore, they are so many Blakes and Howards themselves. There's Jack Oldcastle, now; he's always talking of our reefers as if there was no seablood in our veins, and that just because his own father happened to be a captain—a commodore, he says, because he happened once to have three frigates under his orders."

"Well, that would make a commodore, for the time being. But surely he does not claim privilege for the Oldcastle blood over that of the Clevelands!"

"No, sir; it isn't that sort of thing, at all," returned the fine boy, blushing a little, in spite of his contempt for any such womanly weakness; "you know we never talk of that nonsense in our squadron. With us it's all service, and that sort of thing. Jack Oldcastle says the Clevelands are all civilians, as he calls 'em; or soldiers, which isn't much better, as you know. Now, I tell him that there is an old picture of one of them, with an anchor-button, and that was long before Queen Anne's time—Queen Elizabeth's, perhaps, and then you know, sir, I fetch him up with a yarn about the Hedworths; for I am just as much Hedworth as Cleveland."

"And what does the impudent dog say to that, Geoffrey?"

"Why, sir, he says the name should be spelled Head*work*, and that they were all lawyers. But I gave him as good as he sent for that saucy speech, I'm certain."

"And what did you give him in return for such a compliment? Did you tell him the Oldcastles were just so much stone, and wood, and old iron, and that, too, in a tumbledown condition?"

"No, sir, not I," answered the boy, laughing; "I didn't think of any answer half so clever; and so I just gave him a dig in the nose, and that, laid on with right good will."

"And how did he receive that argument? Was it conclusive—or did the debate continue?"

"O, of course, sir, we fought it out. 'Twas on board the *Dover*, and the first lieutenant saw fair play. Jack carried too many guns for me, sir, for he's more than a year older; but I hulled him so often that he owned it was harder work than being mastheaded. After that the *Dover's* chaps took my part, and they said the Hedworths had no Head-*work* at all, but they were regular sailors; admirals, captains, and youngsters, you know, sir, like the rest of us. I told 'em my grandfather Hedworth was an admiral, and a good one, too."

"In that you make a small mistake. Your mother's father was only a general; but his father was a full admiral of the red—for he lived before that grade was abolished—and as good an officer as ever trod a plank. He was my mother's brother, and both Sir Gervaise and myself served long under his orders. He was a sailor of whom you well might boast."

"I don't think any of the Plantagenets will chase in that quarter again, sir; for we've had an overhauling among our

chaps, and we find we can muster four admirals, two commodores, and thirteen captains in our two messes; that is, counting all sorts of relatives, you know, sir."

"Well, my dear boy, I hope you may live to reckon all that and more, too, in your own persons at some future day. Yonder is Sir Reginald Wychecombe, coming this way, to my surprise; perhaps he wishes to see me alone. Go down to the landing and ascertain if my barge is ashore, and let me know it, as soon as is convenient. Remember, Geoffrey, you will go off with me; and hunt up Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, who will lose his passage, unless ready the instant he is wanted."

The boy touched his cap, and went bounding down the hill to execute the order.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"So glozed the Tempter, and his poison tuned;
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marveling."—MILTON.

IT was, probably, a species of presentiment that induced Bluewater to send away the midshipman, when he saw the adherent of the dethroned house approaching. Enough had passed between the parties to satisfy each of the secret bias of the other; and, by that sort of freemasonry which generally accompanies strong feelings of partisanship, the Admiral felt persuaded that the approaching interview was about to relate to the political troubles of the day.

The season and the hour, and the spot, too, were all poetically favorable to an interview between conspirators. It was now nearly dark; the headland was deserted, Dutton having retired, first to his bottle, and then to his bed; the wind blew heavily athwart the bleak eminence, or was heard scuffling in the caverns of the cliffs, while the portentous clouds that drove through the air now veiled entirely, and now partially and dimly revealed the light of the moon, in a way to render the scene both exciting and wild. No wonder, then, that Bluewater, his visitor drawing near, felt a stronger disposition than had ever yet come over him to listen to the tale of the tempter, as, under all the circumstances, it would scarcely exceed the bounds of justice to call Sir Reginald.

"In seeking you at such a spot, and in the midst of this wild landscape," said the latter, "I might have been assured I should be certain of finding one who really loved the sea and your noble profession. The Hall is a melancholy house just at this moment; and when I inquired for you, no one could say whither you had strolled. In following what I thought a seaman's instinct, it appears that I did well. Do my eyes fail me or are there no more than three vessels at anchor yonder?"

"Your eyes are still good, Sir Reginald; Admiral Oakes sailed several hours since, and he has been followed by all the fleet, with the exception of the two line-of-battle ships and the frigate you see; leaving me to be the last to quit the anchorage."

"Is it a secret of state, or are you permitted to say whither so strong a force has so suddenly sailed?" demanded the baronet, glancing his dark eye so expressively toward the other as to give him, in the growing obscurity, the appearance of an inquisitor. "I had been told the fleet would wait for orders from London."

"Such was the first intention of the commander-in-chief; but intelligence of the sailing of the Comte de Vervillin has induced Sir Gervaise to change his mind. An English Admiral seldom errs when he seeks and beats an active and dangerous enemy."

"Is this always true, Admiral Bluewater?" returned Sir Reginald, dropping in at the side of the other, and joining in his walk, as he paced, to and fro, a short path that Dutton called his own quarter-deck; "or is it merely an unmeaning generality that sometimes causes men to become the dupes of their own imaginations? Are those always our enemies who may seem to be so? or, are we so infallible that every feeling or prejudice may be safely set down as an impulse to which we ought to submit, without questioning its authority?"

"Do you esteem it a prejudice to view France as the natural enemy of England, Sir Reginald?"

"By Heaven, I do, sir! I can conceive that England may be much more her own enemy than France has ever proved to be. Then, conceding that ages of warfare have contributed to awaken some such feeling as this you hint at, is there not a question of right and wrong that lies behind all? Reflect how often England has invaded the French soil, and what serious injuries she has committed on the territory of the latter, while France has so little wronged us, in the same way; how even her throne has been occupied by our princes, and her provinces possessed by our armies."

"I think you hardly allow for all the equity of the different cases. Parts of what is now France were the just inheritance of those who have sat on the English throne, and the quarrels were no more than the usual difficulties of neighborhood. When our claims were just in themselves, you surely could not have wished to see them abandoned."

"Far from it; but when claims were disputed, is it not natural for the loser to view them as a hardship? I believe we should have had a much better neighborhood, as you call it, with France, had not the modern difficulties connected with religious changes, occurred."

"I presume you know, Sir Reginald, that I and all my family are Protestants."

"I do, Admiral Bluewater; and I rejoice to find that a difference of opinion on this great interest does not necessarily produce one on all others. From several little allusions that have passed between us to-day, I am encouraged to believe that we think alike on certain temporal matters, however wide the chasm between us on spiritual things."

"I confess I have fallen into the same conclusion, and I should be sorry to be undeceived if wrong."

"What occasion, then, for farther ambiguity? Surely two honorable men may safely trust each other with their common sentiments, when the times call for decision and frankness! I am a Jacobite, Admiral Bluewater; if I risk life and fortune by making the avowal, I place both, without reserve, at your mercy."

"They could not be in safer hands, sir: and I know no better mode of giving you every possible assurance that the confidence will not be abused, than by telling you in return, that I would cheerfully lay down my life could the sacrifice restore the deposed family to the throne."

"This is noble, and manly, and frank, as I had hoped from a sailor!" exclaimed Sir Reginald, more delighted than he well knew how to express at the moment. "This simple assurance from your lips, carries more weight than all the oaths and pledges of vulgar conspiracy. We understand each other, and I should be truly sorry to inspire less confidence than I feel."

"What better proof can I give you for the reliance placed on your faith, than the declaration you have heard, Sir Reginald? My head would answer for your treachery in a week; but I have never felt it more securely on my shoulders than at this moment."

The Baronet grasped the other's hand, and each gave and received a pressure that was full of meaning. Then both walked on, thoughtful and relieved, for quite a minute, in profound silence.

"This sudden appearance of the Prince in Scotland has taken us all a little by surprise," Sir Reginald resumed, after the pause; "though a few of us knew that his intentions led him this way. Perhaps he has done well to come unattended by a foreign force, and to throw himself, as it might be singly, into the arms of his subjects; trusting everything to their generosity, loyalty, and courage. Some blame him; but I do not. He will awaken interest, now, in every generous heart in the nation"—this was artfully adapted to the character of the listener—"whereas some might feel disposed to be lukewarm under a less manly appeal to their affections and loyalty. In Scotland, we learn from all directions that his Royal Highness is doing wonders, while the friends of his house are full of activity in England,

though compelled, for a time, to be watchful and prudent."

"I rejoice, from the bottom of my heart, to hear this!" said Bluewater, drawing a long breath, like one whose mind was unexpectedly relieved from a heavy load. "From the bottom of my heart do I rejoice! I had my apprehensions that the sudden appearance of the Prince might find his well-wishers unprepared and timid."

"As far from that as possible, my dear sir; though much still depends on the promptitude and resolutions of the master spirits of the party. We are strong enough to control the nation, if we can bring those forward who have the strength to lead, and control ourselves. All we now want is some hundred or two of prominent men to step out of their diffidence, and show us the way to honorable achievement and certain success."

"Can such men be wanting, at a moment like this?"

"I think we are secure of most of the high nobility, though their great risks render them all a little wary in the outset. It is among the professional men—the gallant soldiers, and the bold, ardent seamen of the fleet, that we must look for the first demonstrations of loyalty and true patriotism. To be honest with you, sir, I tire of being ruled by a German."

"Do you know of any intention to rally a force in this part of England, Sir Reginald? If so, say but the word—point out the spot where the standard is to be raised, and I will rally under it, the instant circumstances will permit!"

"This is just what I expected, Mr. Bluewater," answered the baronet, more gratified than he thought it prudent to express: "though it is not the form in which you can best serve us at this precise moment. Cut off from the north, as we are in this part of the island, by all the resources of the actual government, it would be the height of imprudence in us to show our hands, until all the cards are ready to be played. Active and confidential agents are at work in the army; London has its proper share of business men, while others are in the counties, doing their best to put things in shape for the consummation we so anxiously look for. I have been with several of our friends in this vicinity, to bring matters into a combined state; and it was my intention to visit this very estate, to see what my own name might do with the tenantry, had not the late Sir Wycherly summoned me as he did, to attend his death-bed. Have you any clew to the feelings of this new and young head of my family, the sea-lieutenant and present baronet?"

"Not a very plain one, sir, though I doubt if they be favorable to the House of Stuart."

"I feared as much; this very evening I have had an anonymous communication that I think must come from his competitor, pretty plainly intimating that, by asserting his rights, as they are called, the whole Wychecombe tenantry and interest could be united, in the present struggle, on whichever side I might desire to see them."

"This is a bold and decided stroke, truly! May I inquire as to your answer, Sir Reginald?"

"I shall give none. Under all circumstances I will ever refuse to place a bastard in the seat of a legitimate descendant of my family. We contend for legal and natural rights, my dear Admiral, and the means employed should not be unworthy of the end. Besides, I know the scoundrel to be unworthy of trust, and shall not have the weakness to put myself in his power. I could wish the other boy to be of another mind; but, by getting him off to sea, whither he tells me he is bound, we shall at least send him out of harm's way."

In all this Sir Reginald was perfectly sincere; for, while he did not always hesitate about the employment of means, in matters of politics, he was rigidly honest in everything that related to private property; a species of moral contradiction that is sometimes found among men who aim at the management of human affairs: since those often yield to a besetting weakness who are nearly irreproachable in other matters. Bluewater was glad

hear this declaration; his own simplicity of character inducing him to fancy it was an indication to the general probity of his companion.

"Yes," observed the latter, "in all cases, we must maintain the laws of the land in an affair of private right. This young man is not capable, perhaps, of forming a just estimate of his political duties, in a crisis like this, and it may be well, truly, to get him off to sea, lest by taking the losing side, he endangers his estate before he is fairly possessed of it. And having disposed of Sir Wycherly, what can I do most to aid the righteous and glorious cause?"

"This is coming to the point, manfully, Sir Richard—I beg pardon for thus styling you, but I happen to know that your name has been before the prince, for some time, as one of those who are to receive the ribbon from a sovereign really authorized to bestow it; if I have spoken a little prematurely, I again entreat your pardon—but this is at once coming manfully to the point! Serve us you can, of course, and that most effectually, and in an all-important manner. I now greatly regret that my father had not put me in the army, in my youth, that I might serve my prince as I could wish in this perilous trial. But we have many friends accustomed to arms, and among them your own honorable name will appear conspicuous as to the past, and encouraging as to the future."

"I have carried arms from boyhood, it is true, Sir Reginald, but it is in a service that will scarcely much avail us in this warfare. Prince Edward has no ships, nor do I know he will need any."

"True, my dear sir, but King George has! As for the necessity, permit me to say you are mistaken; it will soon be all-important to keep open the communication with the Continent. No doubt Monsieur de Vervillin is out, with some such object, already."

Bluewater started, and he recoiled from the firm grasp which the other took of his arm, in the earnestness of discourse, with some such instinctive aversion as a man recoils from the touch of the reptile. The thought of a treachery like that implied in the remark of his companion had never occurred to him, and his honest mind turned with a strong disrelish from even the implied proposition of the other. Still, he was not quite certain how far Sir Reginald wished to urge him, and he felt it just to ascertain his real views before he answered them. Plausible as this appeared, it was a dangerous delay for one so simple-minded, when brought in contact with one so practiced as the baronet; Sir Reginald having the tact to perceive that his new friend's feelings had already taken the alarm, and at once determined to be more wary.

"What am I to understand by this, Sir Reginald Wychecombe?" demanded the Rear-admiral. "In what manner can I possibly be connected with the naval resources of the House of Hanover, when it is my intention to throw off its service? King George's fleets will hardly aid the Stuarts; and they will, at least, obey the orders of their own officers."

"Not the least doubt in the world of this, Admiral Bluewater! What a glorious privilege it was for Monk to have it in his power to put his liege sovereign in his rightful seat, and thus to save the empire, by a *coup de main*, from the pains and grievances of a civil contest! Of all the glorious names in English history, I esteem that of George Monk as the one most to be envied! It is a great thing to be a prince—one born to be set apart as God's substitute on earth, in all that relates to human justice and human power; yet it is greater, in my eyes, to be the subject to restore the order of these almost divine successions, when once deranged by lawless and presuming men."

"This is true enough, sir; though I would rather have joined Charles on the beach at Dover, armed only with an untainted sword, than followed by an army at my heels!"

"What, when the army followed cheerfully, and was equally eager with yourself to serve their sovereign!"

"That, indeed, might somewhat qualify the feeling. But soldiers and sailors are usually influenced by the opinions of those

who have been placed over them by the higher authorities."

"No doubt they are; and that is as it should be. We are encouraged to believe that some ten or fifteen captains are already well-disposed toward us, and will cheerfully take their respective ships to the points our wants require, the moment they feel assured of being properly led, when collected. By a little timely concert, we can command the North Sea, and keep open important communications with the Continent. It is known the ministry intend to employ as many German troops as they can assemble, and a naval force will be all-important in keeping these mustachioed foreigners at a distance. The quarrel is purely English, sir, and ought to be decided by Englishmen only."

"In that, indeed, I fully concur, Sir Reginald," answered Bluewater, breathing more freely. "I would cruise a whole winter in the North Sea to keep the Dutchmen at home, and let the Englishmen decide who is to be England's king. To me, foreign interference, in such a matter, is the next evil to positive disloyalty to my rightful prince."

"These are exactly my sentiments, dear sir, and I hope to see you act on them. By the way, how happens it you are left alone, and in what manner do you Admirals divide your authority when serving in company?"

"I do not know I comprehend your question, Sir Reginald. I am left here to sail the last with the *Cæsar;* Sir Gervaise leading out in the *Plantagenet,* with a view to draw a line across the channel that shall effectually prevent De Vervillin from getting to the westward."

"To the westward!" repeated the other, smiling ironically, though the darkness prevented the Admiral from seeing the expression of his features. "Does Admiral Oakes then think that the French ships are steering in that direction?"

"Such is our information; have you any reason to suppose that the enemy intend differently?"

The baronet paused, and he appeared to ruminate. Enough had already been said to satisfy him he had not an ordinary mind in that of his companion to deal with, and he was slightly at a loss how to answer. To bring the other within his lures, he was fully resolved; and the spirits that aid the designing just at that moment suggested the plan which, of all others, was most likely to be successful. Bluewater had betrayed his aversion to the interference of foreign troops in the quarrel, and on this subject he intended to strike a chord which he rightly fancied would thrill on the Rear-admiral's feelings.

"We have our information, certainly," answered Sir Reginald, like one who was reluctant to tell all he knew; "though good faith requires it should not actually be exposed. Nevertheless, any one can reason on the probabilities. The Duke of Cumberland will collect his German auxiliaries, and they must get into England the best way that they can. Would an intelligent enemy with a well-appointed fleet suffer this junction, if he could prevent it? We know he would not, and when we remember the precise time of the sailing of the Comte, his probable ignorance of the presence of this squadron of yours, in the channel, and all the other circumstances of the case, who can suppose otherwise than to believe his aim is to intercept the German regiments."

"This does seem plausible; and yet the *Active's* signals told us that the French were steering west; and that, too, with a light westerly wind."

"Do not fleets, like armies, frequently make false demonstrations? Might not Monsieur de Vervillin, so long as his vessels were in sight from the shore, have turned toward the west, with an intention, as soon as covered by the darkness, to incline to the east, again, and sail up channel, under English ensigns, perhaps? Is it not possible for him to pass the Straits of Dover, even, as an English squadron—your own, for instance—and thus deceive the Hanoverian cruisers until ready to seize or destroy any transports that may be sent?"

"Hardly, Sir Reginald," said Bluewater, smiling. "A French ship can no more be mistaken for an English ship,

than a Frenchman can pass for a Briton. We sailors are not as easily deceived as that would show. It is true, however, that a fleet might well stand in one direction, until far enough off the land or covered by night, when it might change its course suddenly, in an opposite direction; and it is possible the Comte de Vervillin has adopted some such stratagem. If he actually knew of the intention to throw German troops into the island, it is even quite probable. In that case, for one, I could actually wish him success!"

"Well, my dear sir, and what is to prevent it?" asked Sir Reginald, with a triumph that was not feigned. "Nothing, you will say, unless he fall in with Sir Gervaise Oakes. But you have not answered my inquiry, as to the manner in which flag-officers divide their commands at sea?"

"As soldiers divide their commands ashore. The superior orders and the inferior obeys."

"Aye, this is true; but it does not meet my question. Here are eleven large ships, and two admirals; now what portion of these ships are under your particular orders, and what portion under those of Sir Gervaise Oakes?"

"The Vice-admiral has assigned to himself a division of six of the ships, and left me for the other five. Each of us has his frigates and smaller vessels. But an order that the commander-in-chief may choose to give any captain must be obeyed by him, as the inferior submits, as a rule, to the last order."

"And you," resumed Sir Reginald, with quickness; "how are you situated, as respects these captains?"

"Should I give a direct order to any captain in the fleet, it would certainly be his duty to obey it; though circumstances might occur which would render it obligatory on him to let me know that he had different instructions from our common superior. But why these questions, Sir Reginald?"

"Your patience, my dear Admiral; and what ships have you specifically under your care?"

"The *Cæsar*, my own; the *Dublin*, the *Elizabeth*, the *York*, and the *Dover*. To these must be added the *Druid* frigate, the sloop of war, and the *Gnat*. My division numbers eight in all."

"What a magnificent force to possess at such a momentous crisis as this! But where are all these vessels? I see but four and a cutter, and only two of these seem to be large."

"The light you perceive there, along the land to the westward, is on board the *Elizabeth;* and that broad off here, in the channel, is on board the *York*. The *Dover's* lantern has disappeared farther to the southward. Ah! there the *Dublin* casts, and is off after the others!"

"And you intend to follow, Admiral Bluewater?"

"Within an hour, or I shall lose the division. As it is, I have been deliberating on the propriety of calling back the sternmost ships, and collecting them in close squadron; for this increase and hauling of the wind render it probable they will lose the Vice-admiral, and that daylight will find the line scattered and in confusion. One mind must control the movements of ships, as well as of battalions, Sir Reginald, if they are to act in concert."

"With what view would you collect the vessels you have mentioned, and in the manner you have named, if you do not deem my inquiry indiscreet?" demanded the baronet, with quickness.

"Simply that they might be kept together, and brought in subjection to my own particular signals. This is the duty that more especially falls to my share, as head of the division."

"Have you the means to effect this, here, on this hill, and by yourself, sir?"

"It would be a great oversight to neglect so important a provision. My signal officer is lying under yonder cover, wrapped in his cloak, and two quartermasters are in readiness to make the very signal in question; for its necessity has been foreseen, and really would seem to be approaching. If done at all, it must be done quickly, too. The light of the *York* grows dim in the distance. It shall be done, sir; prudence requires it, and

you shall see the manner in which we hold our distant ships in command."

Bluewater could not have announced more agreeable intelligence to his companion. Sir Reginald was afraid to propose the open treason he meditated; but he fancied, if the Rear-admiral could fairly withdraw his own division from the fleet, it would at once weaken the Vice-admiral so much as to render an engagement with the French impossible, and might lead to such a separation of the commands as to render the final defection of the division in-shore easier of accomplishment. It is true, Bluewater himself was actuated by motives directly contrary to these wishes; but, as the parties traveled the same road to a certain point, the intriguing baronet had his expectations of being able to persuade his new friend to continue on in his own route.

Promptitude is a military virtue, and, among seamen, it is a maxim to do everything that is required to be done, with activity and vigor. These laws were not neglected on the present occasion. No sooner had the Rear-admiral determined on his course, than he summoned his agents to put it in execution. Lord Geoffrey had returned to the heights and was within call, and he carried the orders to the lieutenant and the quartermasters. The lanterns only required lighting, and then they were run aloft on Dutton's staff, as regularly as the same duty could have been performed on the poop of the *Cæsar*. Three rockets were thrown up, immediately after, and the gun kept on the cliffs for that purpose was fired, to draw attention to the signal. It might have been a minute ere the heavy ordnance of the *Cæsar* repeated the summons, and the same signal was shown at her masthead. The *Dublin* was still so near that no time was lost, but, according to orders, she too repeated the signal; for in the line that night, it was understood that an order of this nature was to be sent from ship to ship.

"Now for the *Elizabeth!*" cried Bluewater; "she cannot fail to have heard our guns, and to see our signals."

"The *York* is ahead of her, sir!" exclaimed the boy; "see, she has the signal up already!"

All this passed in a very few minutes, the last ship having sailed in the expectation of receiving some such recall. The *York* preceded the ship next to her in the line, in consequence of having gone about, and being actually nearer the Rear-admiral than the second astern. It was but a minute before the gun and the lanterns of the *Elizabeth*, however, announced her knowledge of the order, also.

The two ships last named were no longer visible from the cliffs, though their positions were known by their lights; but no sign whatever indicated the part of the ocean on which the *Dover* was struggling along through the billows. After a pause of several minutes, Bluewater spoke.

"I fear we shall collect no more," he said; "one of my ships must take her chance to find the commander-in-chief, alone. Ha!—that means something!"

At this instant a faint, distant flash was seen, for a single moment, in the gloom, and all heads were bent forward to listen, in breathless attention. A little time had elapsed, when the dull smothered report of a gun proclaimed that even the *Dover* had caught the rapidly transmitted order.

"What means that, sir?" eagerly demanded Sir Reginald, who had attended to everything with intense expectation.

"It means, sir, that all the divisions are still under my command. No other ship would note the order. Their directions, unless specifically pointed out by their numbers, must come from the Vice-admiral. Is my barge ashore, Lord Geoffrey Cleveland?"

"It is, sir, as well as the cutter for Mr. Cornet and the quartermasters."

"It is well. Gentlemen, we will go on board; the *Cæsar* must weigh and join the other vessels in the offing. I will follow you to the landing, but you will shove off, at once, and desire Captain Stowel to weigh and cast to-port. We will fill on the starboard tack, and haul directly off the land."

The whole party immediately left the

station, hurrying down to the boats, leaving Bluewater and Sir Reginald to follow more leisurely. It was a critical moment for the baronet, who had so nearly effected his purpose that his disappointment would have been double, did he fail of his object altogether. He determined, therefore, not to quit the Admiral while there was the slightest hope of success. The two consequently descended together to the shore, walking, for the first minute or two, in profound silence.

"A great game is in your hand, Admiral Bluewater," resumed the baronet; "rightly played, it may secure the triumph of the good cause. I think I may say I know De Vervillin's object, and that his success will reseat the Stuarts on the throne of their ancestors! One who loves them should ponder well before he does aught to mar so glorious a result."

This speech was as bold as it was artful. In point of fact, Sir Reginald Wychecombe knew no more of the Comte de Vervillin's intended movements than his companion; but he did not hesitate to assert what he now did in order to obtain a great political advantage, in a moment of so much importance. To commit Bluewater and his captains openly on the side of the Stuarts would be a great achievement in itself; to frustrate the plans of Sir Gervaise might safely be accounted another; and then, there were all the chances that the Frenchman was not at sea for nothing, and that his operations might indeed cover the movements of the princes. The baronet, upright as he was in other matters, had no scruples of conscience on this occasion; having long since brought himself over to the belief that it was justifiable to attain ends as great as those he had in view, by the sacrifice of any of the minor moral considerations.

The effect on Bluewater was not trifling. The devil had placed the bait before his eyes in a most tempting form; for he felt that he had only to hold his division in reserve, to render an engagement morally improbable. Abandon his friend to a superior force he could not and would not; but it is our painful duty to avow that his mind had glimpses of the possibility of doing the adventurer in Scotland a great good, without doing the Vice-admiral and the van of the fleet any essential harm. Let us be understood, however. The Rear-admiral did not even contemplate treason, or serious defection of any sort; but through one of those avenues of frailty by which men are environed, he had a glance at results that the master-spirit of evil momentarily placed before his mental vision as both great and glorious.

"I wish we were really certain of De Vervillin's object," he said; the only concession he made to this novel feeling, in words. "It might, indeed, throw a great light on the course we ought to take ourselves. I do detest this German alliance, and would abandon the service ere I would convey or transport a ragamuffin of them all to England."

Here Sir Reginald proved how truly expert he was in the arts of management. A train of thought and feeling had been lighted in the mind of his companion, which he felt might lead to all he wished, while he was apprehensive that farther persuasion would awaken opposition, and renew old sentiments. He wisely determined, therefore, to leave things as they were, trusting to the strong and declared bias of the Admiral in favor of the revolution, to work out its own consequences, with a visible and all-important advantage so prominently placed before his eyes.

"I know nothing of ships," he answered, modestly, "but I do know that the Comte has our succor in view. It would ill become me to advise one of your experience how to lead a force like this, which is subject to your orders; but a friend of the good cause, who is now in the West, and who was lately in the presence itself, tells me that the Prince manifested extreme satisfaction when he learned how much it might be in your power to serve him."

"Do you then think my name has reached the royal ear, and that the Prince has any knowledge of my real feelings?"

"Nothing but your extreme modesty

could cause you to doubt the first, sir; as to the last, ask yourself how came I to approach you to-night, with my heart in my hand, as it might be, making you master of my life as well as of my secret. Love and hatred are emotions that soon betray themselves."

It is a matter of historical truth that men of the highest principles and strongest minds have yielded to the flattery of rank. Bluewater's political feelings had rendered him indifferent to the blandishments of the court at London, while his imagination, that chivalrous deference to antiquity and political right, which lay at the root of his Jacobitism, and his brooding sympathies, disposed him but too well to become the dupe of language like this. Had he been more a man of facts, one less under the influence of his own imagination; had it been his good fortune to live even in contact with those he now so devoutly worshiped, in a political sense at least, their influence over a mind as just and clear-sighted as his own would soon have ceased; but, passing his time at sea, they had the most powerful auxiliary possible, in the high faculty he possessed of fancying things as he wished them to be. No wonder, then, that he heard this false assertion of Sir Reginald with a glow of pleasure; with even a thrill at the heart to which he had long been a stranger. For a time, his better feelings were smothered in this new and treacherous sensation.

The gentlemen, by this time, were at the landing, and it became necessary to separate. The barge of the Rear-admiral was with difficulty kept from leaping on the rock, by means of oars and boat-hooks, and each instant rendered the embarkation more and more difficult. The moments were precious on more accounts than one, and the leave-taking was short. Sir Reginald said but little, though he intended the pressure of the hand he gave his companion to express everything.

"God be with you," he added; "and as you prove true, may you prove successful. Remember, 'A lawful prince, and the claims of birthright.' God be with you!"

"Adieu, Sir Reginald; when we next meet, the future will probably be more apparent to us all. But who comes hither, rushing like a madman toward the boat?"

A form came leaping through the darkness; nor was it known, until it stood within two feet of Bluewater, it was that of Wycherly. He had heard the guns and seen the signals. Guessing at the reasons, he dashed from the park, which he was pacing to cool his agitation, and which now owned him for a master, and ran the whole distance to the shore, in order not to be left. His arrival was most opportune; for, in another minute, the barge left the rock..

CHAPTER XIX.

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home."
—THE CORSAIR.

ONE is never fully aware of the extent of the movement that agitates the bosom of the ocean until fairly subject to its action himself, when indeed we all feel its power and reason closely on its dangers. The first pitch of his boat told Bluewater that the night threatened to be serious. As the lusty oarsmen bent to their stroke, the barge rose on a swell, dividing the foam that glanced past it like a marine aurora borealis, and then plunged into the trough as if descending to the bottom. It required several united and vigorous efforts to force the little craft from its dangerous vicinity to the rocks, and to get it in perfect command. This once done, however, the well-practiced crew urged the barge slowly but steadily ahead.

"A dirty night!—a dirty night!" muttered Bluewater, unconsciously, to himself; "we should have had a wild berth, had we rowed out this blow, at anchor. Oakes will have a heavy time of it yonder in the very chops of the channel, with a westerly swell heaving in against this ebb."

"Yes, sir," answered Wycherly; "'

Vice-admiral will be looking out for us all, anxiously enough, in the morning."

Not another syllable did Bluewater utter until his boat had touched the side of the *Cæsar*. He reflected deeply on his situation, and those who know his feelings will easily understand that his reflections were not altogether free from pain. Such as they were, he kept them to himself, however, and in a man-of-war's boat, when a flag officer chooses to be silent, it is a matter of course for his inferiors to imitate his example.

The barge was about a quarter of a mile from the landing, when the heavy flap of the *Cæsar's* main topsail was heard, as, close-reefed, it struggled for freedom, while her crew drew its sheets down to the blocks on the lower yard-arms. A minute later, the *Gnat*, under the head of her fore-and-aft-mainsail, was seen standing slowly off from the land, looking in the darkness like some half-equipped shadow of herself. The sloop of war, too, was seen bending low to the force of the wind, with her mere apology of a topsail thrown aback, in waiting for the flag-ship to cast.

The surface of the waters was a sheet of glancing foam, while the air was filled with the blended sounds of the wash of the element, and the roar of the winds. Still there was nothing chilling or repulsive in the temperature of the air, which was charged with the freshness of the sea, and was bracing and animating, bringing with it the flavor that a seaman loves. After fully fifteen minutes' severe tugging at the oars, the barge drew near enough to permit the black mass of the *Cæsar* to be seen. For some time, Lord Geoffrey, who had seated himself at the tiller—yoke-lines were not used a century since—steered by the top-light of the Rear-admiral; but now the maze of hamper was seen waving slowly to and fro in the lurid heavens, and the huge hull became visible, heaving and setting, as if the ocean groaned with the labor of lifting such a pile of wood and iron. A light gleamed from the cabin windows, and ever and anon one glanced athwart an open gun-room port. In all other respects, the ship presented but one hue of blackness. Nor was it an easy undertaking, even after the barge was under the lee of the ship, for those in it to quit its uneasy support and get a firm footing on the cleats that lined the vessel's side like a ladder. This was done, however, and all ascended to the deck but two of the crew, who remained to hook-on the yard and stay-tackles. This effected, the shrill whistle gave the word, and that large boat, built to carry at need some twenty souls, was raised from the raging water, as it were by some gigantic effort of the ship herself, and safely deposited in her bosom.

"We are none too soon, sir," said Stowel, the moment he had received the Rear-admiral with the customary etiquette of the hour. "It's a capful of wind already, and it promises to blow harder before morning. We are catted and fished, sir, and the forecastlemen are passing the shank-painter at this moment."

"Fill, sir, and stretch off, on an easy bowline," was the answer; "when a league in the offing, let me know it. Mr. Cornet, I have need of you, in my cabin."

As this was said, Bluewater went below, followed by his signal-officer. At the same instant the first lieutenant called out to man the main-braces, and to fill the topsail. As soon as this command was obeyed, the *Cæsar* started ahead. Her movement was slow, but it had majesty in it, that set at naught the turbulence of the elements.

Bluewater had paced to and fro in his cabin no less than six times, with his head drooping, in a thoughtful attitude, ere his attention was called to any external object.

"Do you wish my presence, Admiral Bluewater?" the signal-officer at length inquired.

"I ask your pardon, Mr. Cornet; I was really unconscious that you were in the cabin. Let me see—aye—our last signal was, 'Division come within hail of Rear-admiral.' They must get close to us, to be able to do that to-night, Cornet! The wind and waves have begun their song in earnest."

"And yet, sir, I'll venture a month's

pay that Captain Drinkwater brings the *Dover* so near us, as to put the officer of the watch and quartermaster at the wheel in a fever. We once made that signal, in a gale of wind, and he passed his jib-boom-end over our taffrail."

"He is certainly a most literal gentleman, that Captain Drinkwater, but he knows how to take care of his ship. Look for the number of 'Follow the Rear-admiral's motions.' 'Tis 211, I think."

"No, sir; but 212. Blue, red, and white, with the flags. With the lanterns, 'tis one of the simplest signals we have."

"We will make it, at once. When that is done show 'The Rear-admiral; keep in his wake, in the general order of sailing.' That I am sure is 204."

"Yes, sir, you are quite right. Shall I show the second signal as soon as all the vessels have answered the first, sir?"

"That is my intention, Cornet. When all have answered, let me know it."

Mr. Cornet now left the cabin, and Bluewater took a seat in an arm-chair, in deep meditation. For quite half an hour the former was busy on the poop, with his two quartermasters, going through the slow and far from easy duty of making night-signals, as they were then practiced at sea. It was some time before the most distant vessel, the *Dover*, gave any evidence of comprehending the first order, and then the same tardy operation had to be gone through with for the second. At length the sentinel threw open the cabin-door, and Cornet reappeared. During the whole of his absence on deck, Bluewater had not stirred; scarce seemed to breathe. His thoughts were away from his ships, and for the first time, in the ten years he had worn a flag, he had forgotten the order he had given.

"The signals are made and answered, sir," said Cornet, as soon as he had advanced to the edge of the table, on which the Rear-admiral's elbow was leaning. "The *Dublin* is already in our wake, and the *Elizabeth* is bearing down fast on our weather-quarter; she will bring herself into her station in ten minutes."

"What news of the *York* and *Dover*, Cornet?" asked Bluewater, rousing himself from a fit of deep abstraction.

"The *York's* light nears us, quite evidently; though that of the *Dover* is still a fixed star, sir," answered the lieutenant, chuckling a little at his own humor; "it seems no larger than it did when we first made it."

"It is something to have made it at all. I was not aware it could be seen from deck."

"Nor can it, sir; but by going up half-a-dozen ratlines we get a look at it. Captain Drinkwater bowses up his lights to the gaff-end, and I can see him always ten minutes sooner than any other ship in the fleet under the same circumstances."

"Drinkwater is a careful officer; do the bearings of his light alter enough to tell the course he is steering?"

"I think they do, sir, though our standing out athwart his line of sailing would make the change slow, of course. Every foot we get to the southward, you know, sir, would throw his bearings farther west; while every foot he comes east would counteract that change, and throw his bearings farther south."

"That's very clear; but, as he must go three fathoms to our one, running off with square yards before such a breeze, I think we should be constantly altering his bearings to the southward."

"No doubt of it, in the world, sir; and that is just what we are doing. I think I can see a difference of half a point already; but when we get his light fairly in view from the poop, we shall be able to tell with perfect accuracy."

"All very well, Cornet. Do me the favor to desire Captain Stowel to step into the cabin; and keep a bright lookout for the ships of the division. Stay for a single instant; what particularly sharp-eyed youngster happens to belong to the watch on deck?"

"I know none keener in that way than Lord Geoffrey Cleveland, sir; he can see all the roguery that is going on in the whole fleet, at any rate, and ought to see other things."

"He will do perfectly well; send the young gentleman to me, sir; but first in-

form the officer of the watch that I have need of him."

Bluewater was unusually fastidious in exercising his authority over those who had temporary superiors on the assigned duty of the ship; and he never sent an order to any of the watch, without causing it to pass through the officer of that watch. He waited but a minute before the boy appeared.

"Have you a good grip to-night, boy?" asked the Rear-admiral, smiling; "or will it be both hands for yourself and none for the king? I want you on the fore-topgallant-yard, for eight or ten minutes."

"Well, sir, it's a plain road there, and one I've often traveled," returned the lad, cheerfully.

"That I well know; you are certainly no skulk when duty is to be done. Go aloft, then, and ascertain if the lights of any of Sir Gervaise's squadron are to be seen. You will remember that the *Dover* bears somewhat about southwest of us, and that she is still a long way to seaward. I should think all of Sir Gervaise's ships must be quite as far to windward as that point would bring them, but much farther off. By looking sharp a point or half a point to windward of the *Dover*, you may possibly see the light of the *Warspite*, and then we shall get a correct idea of the bearings of all the rest of the division——"

"Aye, aye, sir," interrupted the boy; "I think I understand exactly what you wish to know, Admiral Bluewater."

"That is a natural gift at sixteen, my lord," returned the Admiral, smiling; "but it may be improved a little, perhaps, by the experience of fifty years. Now, it is possible Sir Gervaise may have gone about as soon as the flood made; in which case he ought to bear nearly to the west of us, and you will also look in that direction. On the other hand, Sir Gervaise may have stretched so far over toward the French coast before night shut in, as to feel satisfied Monsieur de Vervillin is still to the eastward of him; in which case he would keep off a little, and may, at this moment, be nearly ahead of us. So that, under all circumstances, you will sweep the horizon, from the weather-beam to the lee-bow, ranging forward. Am I understood, now, my lord?"

"Yes, sir, I think you are," answered the boy, blushing at his own impetuosity. "You will excuse my indiscretion, Admiral Bluewater; but I thought I understood all you desired, when I spoke so hastily."

"No doubt you did, Geoffrey, but you perceive you did not. Nature has made you quick of apprehension, but not quick enough to foresee all an old man's gossip. Come nearer, now, and let us shake hands. So go aloft, and hold on well, for it is a windy night, and I do not desire to lose you overboard."

The boy did as told, squeezed Bluewater's hand, and dashed out of the cabin to conceal his tears. As for the Rear-admiral, he immediately relapsed into his fit of forgetfulness, waiting for the arrival of Stowel.

A summons to a captain does not as immediately produce a visit, on board a vessel of war, as a summons to a midshipman. Captain Stowel was busy in looking at the manner in which his boats were stowed, when Cornet told him of the Rear-admiral's request; and then he had to give some orders to the first lieutenant concerning the fresh meat that had been got off, and one or two other similar little things, before he was at leisure to comply.

"See me, do you say, Mr. Cornet; in his own cabin, as soon as it is convenient?" he at length remarked, when all these several offices had been duly performed.

The signal-officer repeated the request, word for word as he had heard it, when he turned to take another look at the light of the *Dover*. As for Stowel, he cared no more for the *Dover*, windy and dark as the night promised to be, than the burgher is apt to care for his neighbor's house when the whole street is threatened with destruction. To him the *Cæsar* was the great center of attraction, and Cornet paid him off in kind; for, of all the vessels in the fleet, the *Cæsar* was precisely the one to which he gave the least attention; and this for the simple

reason that she was the only ship to which he never gave, or from which he never received a signal.

"Well, Mr. Bluff," said Stowel to the first lieutenant; "one of us will have to be on deck most of the night, and I'll take a slant below, for half an hour first, and see what the Admiral wishes."

Thus saying, the captain left the deck, in order to ascertain his superior's pleasure. Captain Stowel was several years the senior of Bluewater, having actually been a lieutenant in one of the frigates in which the Rear-admiral had served as a midshipman; a circumstance to which he occasionally alluded in their present intercourse. The change in the relative positions was the result of the family influence of the junior, who had passed his senior in the grade of master and commander; a rank that then brought many an honest man up for life, in the English marine. At the age of five-and-forty, that at which Bluewater first hoisted his flag, Stowel was posted, and soon after he was invited by his old shipmate, who had once had him under him as his first lieutenant in a sloop of war, to take the command of his flag-ship. From that day down to the present moment, the two officers had sailed together, whenever they sailed at all, perfectly good friends; though the captain never appeared entirely to forget the time when they were in the aforesaid frigate; one as a gunroom officer, and the other only a "youngster."

Stowel must now have been about sixty-five; a square, hard-featured, red-faced seaman, who knew all about his ship, from her truck to her limber-rope, but who troubled himself very little about anything else. He married a widow when he was posted, but was childless, and had long since permitted his affections to wander back into their former channels; from the domestic hearth to his ship. He seldom spoke of matrimony, but the little he saw fit to say on the subject was comprehensive and to the point. A perfectly sober man, he consumed large quantities of wine and brandy, as well as of tobacco, and never seemed to be the worse for either. Loyal he was by political faith, and he looked upon a revolution, let its object be what it might, as he would have regarded a mutiny in the *Cæsar*. He was exceedingly pertinacious of his rights as "captain of his own ship," both ashore and afloat; a disposition that produced less trouble with the mild and gentlemanly Rear-admiral than with Mrs. Stowel. If we add that this plain sailor never looked into a book, his proper scientific work excepted, we shall have said all of him that his connection with our tale demands.

"Good evening, Admiral Bluewater," said this true tar, saluting the Rear-admiral, as one neighbor would greet another, on dropping in of an evening, for they occupied different cabins. "Mr. Cornet told me you would like to say a word to me before I turned in; if, indeed, turn in at all I do this blessed night."

"Take a seat, Stowel, and a glass of this sherry, in the bargain," Bluewater answered, kindly, showing how well he understood his man, by the manner in which he shoved both bottle and glass within reach of his hand. "How goes the night? and is this wind likely to stand?"

"I'm of opinion, sir—we'll drink his Majesty, if you've no objection, Admiral Bluewater—I'm of opinion, we shall stretch the threads of that new main-topsail, before we've done with the breeze, sir. I believe I've not told you, yet, that I've had the new sail bent, since we last spoke together on the subject. It's a good fit, sir; and, close-reefed, the sail stands like the side of a house."

"I'm glad to hear it, Stowel; though I think all your canvas usually appears to be in its place."

"Why, you know, Admiral Bluewater, that I've been long enough at it, to understand something about the matter. It is now more than forty years since we were in the *Calypso* together, and ever since that time I've borne the commission of an officer. You were then a youngster, and thought more of your joke than of bending sails, or of seeing how they would stand."

"There wasn't much of me, certainly, forty years ago, Stowel: but I well re-

member the knack you had of making every robin, sheet, bowline, and thread do its duty, then, as you do to-day. By the way, can you tell me anything of the *Dover*, this evening?"

"Not I, sir; she came out with the rest of us, I suppose, and must be somewhere in the fleet; though I dare say the log will have it all, if she has been anywhere near us, lately. I am sorry we did not go into one of the watering-ports, instead of this open roadstead, for we must be at least twenty-seven hundred gallons short of what we ought to have, by my calculation; and then we want a new set of light spars, pretty much all round; and the lower hold hasn't as many barrels of provisions in it, by thirty-odd, as I could wish to see there."

"I leave these things to you, entirely, Stowel; you will report in time to keep the ship efficient."

"No fear of the *Cæsar*, sir; for, between Mr. Bluff, the master, and myself, we know pretty much all about her; though I dare say there are men in the fleet who can tell you more about the *Dublin*, or the *Dover*, or the *York*. We will drink the Queen, and all the royal family, if you please, sir."

As usual, Bluewater merely bowed, for his companion required no farther acquiescence in his toasts. Just at that moment, too, it would have needed a general order, at least, to induce him to drink any of the family of the reigning house.

"Oakes must be well off, mid-channel, by this time, Captain Stowel?"

"I should think he might be, sir; though I can't say I took particular notice of the time he sailed. I dare say it's all in the log. The *Plantagenet* is a fast ship, sir, and Captain Greenly understands her trim, and what she can do on all tacks; and yet, I do think his Majesty has one ship in this fleet that can find a Frenchman quite as soon, and deal with him, when found, quite as much to the purpose."

"Of course you mean the *Cæsar*; well, I'm quite of your way of thinking, though Sir Gervaise manages never to be in a slow ship. I suppose you know, Stowel, that Monsieur de Vervillin is out, and that we may expect to see or hear something of him, to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir, there is some such conversation in the ship, I know; but the quantity of galley-news is so great in this squadron, that I never attend much to what is said. One of the officers brought off a rumor, I believe, that there was a sort of a row in Scotland. By the way, sir, there is a supernumerary lieutenant on board, and as he has joined entirely without orders, I'm at a loss how to berth or to provision him. We can treat the gentleman hospitably to-night; but in the morning I shall be obliged to get him regularly on paper."

"You mean Sir Wycherly Wychecombe; he shall come into my mess rather than give you any trouble."

"I shall not presume to meddle with any gentleman you may please to invite into your cabin, sir," answered Stowel, with a stiff bow, in the way of apology. "That's what I always tell Mrs. Stowel, sir—that my cabin is my own, and even a wife has no right to shake a broom in it."

"Which is a great advantage to us seamen; for it gives us a citadel to retreat to, when the outworks are pressed. You appear to take but little interest in this civil war, Stowel!"

"Then it's true, is it, sir? I didn't know but it might turn out to be galley-news. Pray what is the rumpus all about, Admiral Bluewater? for I never could get that story fidded properly, so as to set up the rigging, and have the spar well stayed in its place."

"It is merely a war to decide who shall be king of England; nothing else, I do assure you, sir."

"They're an uneasy set ashore, sir, if the truth must be said of them! We've got one king, already; and on what principle does any man wish for more? Now, there was Captain Blakely, from the *Elizabeth*, on board of me this afternoon; and we talked the matter over a little, and both of us concluded that they got these things up much as a matter of profit among the army contractors, and the dealers in warlike stores."

Bluewater listened with intense inter-

est, for here was proof how completely two of his captains, at least, would be at his own command, and how little they would be likely, for a time, at least, to dispute any of his orders. He thought of Sir Reginald, and of the rapture with which he would have received this trait of nautical character.

"There are people who set their hearts on the result, notwithstanding," carelessly observed the Rear-admiral; "and some who see their fortunes marred or promoted, by the success or downfall of the party. They think De Vervillin is out on some errand connected with this rising in the north."

"Well, I don't see what he has got to do with the matter at all; for I don't suppose that King Louis is such a fool as to expect to be the king of England as well as king of France!"

"The dignity would be too much for one pair of shoulders to bear. As well might one Admiral wish to command all the divisions of his own fleet, though they were fifty leagues asunder."

"Or one captain two ships; or what is more to the purpose, sir, one ship to keep two captains. We'll drink to discipline, if you've no objections, sir. 'Tis the soul of order and quiet, ashore or afloat. For my part, I want no co-equal—I believe that's the cant word they use on such occasions—but I want no co-equal in the *Cæsar*, and I am unwilling to have one in the house at Greenwich; though Mrs. Stowel thinks differently. Here's my ship; she's in her place in the line; it's my business to see she is fit for any service that a first-class two-decker can undertake, and the duty I endeavor to perform; and I make no doubt it is all the better performed because there's no wife or co-equal aboard here. Where the ship is to go, and what she is to do, are other matters, which I take from general orders, or signals. Let them act up to this principle in London, and we should hear no more of disturbances, north or south.

"Certainly, Stowel, your doctrine would make a quiet nation, as well as a quiet ship. I hope you do me the justice to think there is no co-equal in my commands!"

"That there is not, sir—and I have the honor to drink your health—that there is not. When we were in the *Calypso* together, I had the advantage, and I must say that I never had a youngster under me who ever did his duty more cheerfully. Since that day we've shifted places; end for end, as one might say; and I endeavor to pay you in your own coin. There is no man whose orders I obey more willingly or more to my own advantage; always excepting those of Admiral Oakes, who, being commander-in-chief, overlays us with all his anchor. We must dowse our peaks to his signals, though we can maintain, without mutinying, that the *Cæsar* is as good a boat on or off a wind, as the *Plantagenet*, the best day Sir Jarvy's ever saw."

"There is no manner of doubt of that. You have all the notions of a true sailor, I find, Stowel; obey orders before all other things. I am curious to know how our captains, generally, stand affected to this claim which the Pretender has set up to the throne."

"Can't tell you, on my soul, sir; though I fancy few of them give themselves any great anxiety in the matter. When the wind is fair we can run off large, and when it is foul we must haul upon a bowline, let who will reign. I was a youngster under Queen Anne, and she was a Stuart, I believe; and I have served under the German family ever since; and to be frank with you, Admiral Bluewater, I see but little difference in the duty, the pay, or the rations. My maxim is to obey orders, and then I know the blame will fall on them that give them, if anything goes wrong."

"We have many Scotchmen in the fleet, Stowel," observed the Rear-admiral, in a musing manner, like one who rather thought aloud than spoke. "Several of the captains are from the North of Tweed."

"Aye, sir, one is pretty certain of meeting gentlemen from that part of the island, in almost all situations in life. I never have understood that Scotland had

much of a navy in ancient times, and yet the moment old England has to pay for it, the lairds are willing enough to send their children to sea."

"Nevertheless it must be owned that they make gallant and useful officers, Stowel."

"No doubt they do, sir; but gallant and useful men are not scarce anywhere. You and I are too old and too experienced, Admiral Bluewater, to put any faith in the notion that courage belongs to any particular part of the world, or usefulness either. I never fought a Frenchman yet that I thought a coward; and, in my judgment, there are brave men enough in England to command all her ships, and to fight them too."

"Let this be so, Stowel, still we must take things as they come. What do you think of the night?"

"Dirty enough before morning, I should think, sir, though it is a little out of rule, that it does not rain with this wind, already. The next time we come-to, Admiral Bluewater, I intend to anchor with a shorter scope of cable than we have been doing lately; for I begin to think there is no use in wetting so many yarns in the summer months. They tell me the *York* brings up always on forty fathoms."

"That's a short range, I should think, for a heavy ship. But here is a visitor."

The sentinel opened the cabin-door, and Lord Geoffrey, with his cap fastened to his head by a pocket-handkerchief, and his face red with exposure to the wind, entered the cabin.

"Well," said Bluewater, quietly; "what is the report from aloft?"

"The *Dover* is running down athwart our forefoot, and nearing us fast, sir," returned the midshipman. "The *York* is close on our weather-beam, edging into her station; but I can make out nothing ahead of us, though I was on the yard twenty minutes."

"Did you look well on the weather-beam, and thence forward to the lee-bow?"

"I did, sir; if any light is in view, better eyes than mine must find it."

Stowel looked from one to the other, as this short conversation was held; but as soon as there was a pause, he put in a word in behalf of the ship.

"You've been up forward, my lord?" he said.

"Yes, I have, Captain Stowel."

"And you did not think of seeing how the heel of the topgallant-mast stood it, in this sea? Bluff tells me 'tis too loose to be fit for very heavy weather."

"I did not, sir. I was sent aloft to look out for the ships of the commander-in-chief's division, and didn't think of the heel of the topgallant-mast's being too loose, at all."

"Aye, that's the way with all the youngster's, nowadays. In my time, or even in yours, Admiral Bluewater, we never put our feet on a ratline, but hands and eyes were at work, until we reached the halting place, even though it should be the truck. That is the manner to know what a ship is made of!"

"I kept my hands and eyes at work, too, Captain Stowel, but it was to hold on well, and to look out well."

"That will never do—that will never do, if you wish to make yourself a sailor. Begin with your own ship first; learn all about her, then, when you get to be an admiral, as your father's son, my lord, will be certain to become, it will be time enough to be inquiring about the rest of the fleet."

"You forget, Captain Stowel——"

"That will do, Lord Geoffrey," Bluewater soothingly interposed, for he knew that the captain preached no more than he literally practiced; "if I am satisfied with your report, no one else has a right to complain. Desire Sir Wycherly Wychecombe to meet me on deck, where we will now go, Stowel, and take a look at the weather for ourselves."

"With all my heart, Admiral Bluewater, though I'll just drink the First Lord's health before we quit this excellent liquor. That youngster has stuff in him, in spite of his nobility, and by fetching him up with round turns, occasionally, I hope to make a man of him yet."

"If he do not grow into that character, physically and morally, within the next

few years, sir, he will be the first person of his family who has ever failed of it."

As Bluewater said this, he and the captain left his cabin and ascended to the quarter-deck. Here Stowel stopped to hold a consultation with his first lieutenant, while the Admiral went up the poop-ladder, and joined Cornet. The last had nothing new to communicate, and as he was permitted to go below, he was desired to send Wycherly up to the poop, where the young man was expected by the Rear-admiral.

Some little time elapsed before the Virginian could be found; no sooner was this effected, however, than he joined Bluewater. They had a private conversation of fully half an hour, pacing the poop the whole time, and then Cornet was summoned back again to his usual station. The latter immediately received an order to acquaint Captain Stowel the Rear-admiral desired that the *Cæsar* might be hove-to, and to make a signal for the *Druid* 36 to come under the flagship's lee and back her main-topsail. No sooner did this order reach the quarter-deck than the watch was sent to the braces, and the main-yard was rounded in, until the portion of sail that was still set lay against the mast. This deadened the way of the huge body, which rose and fell heavily in the seas, as they washed under her, scarcely large enough to lift the burden it imposed upon them. Just at this instant the signal was made.

The sudden check to the movement of the *Cæsar* brought the *Dublin* looming up in the darkness, when putting her helm up, that ship surged slowly past to leeward, resembling a black mountain moving by in the gloom. She was hailed and directed to heave-to, also, as soon as far enough ahead. The *Elizabeth* followed, clearing the flag-ship by merely twenty fathoms, and receiving a similar order. The *Druid* had been on the Admiral's weather-quarter, but she now came gliding down, with the wind abeam, taking room to back her topsail under the *Cæsar's* lee-bow. By this time a cutter was in the water, rising six or eight feet up the black side of the ship, and sinking as low apparently beneath her bottom. Next, Wycherly reported himself ready to proceed.

"You will not forget, sir," said Bluewater, "any part of my commission; but inform the commander-in-chief of the whole. It may be important that we understand each other fully. You will also hand him this letter which I have hastily written while the boat was getting ready."

"I think I understand your wishes, sir—at least, I hope so; and I will endeavor to execute them."

"God bless you, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe," added Bluewater, with emotion. "We may never meet again, we sailors carry uncertain lives; and we may be said to carry them in our hands."

Wycherly took his leave of the Admiral, and he ran down the poop-ladder to descend into the boat. Twice he paused on the quarter-deck, however, in the manner of one who felt disposed to return and ask some explanation; but each time he moved on, decided to proceed.

It needed all the agility of our young sailor to get safely into the boat. This done, the oars fell and the cutter was driven swiftly away to leeward. In a few minutes, it shot beneath the lee of the frigate, and discharged its freight. Wycherly could not have been three minutes on the deck of the *Druid* ere her yards were braced up, and her topsail filled with a heavy flap. This caused her to draw slowly ahead.

Five minutes later, however, a white cloud was seen dimly fluttering over her hull, and the reefed mainsail was distended to the wind. The effect was so instantaneous that the frigate seemed to glide away from the flag-ship, and in a quarter of an hour, under her three topsails double reefed, and her course, she was a mile distant on her weather-bow. Those who watched her movements without understanding them, observed that she lowered her light and appeared to detach herself from the rest of the division.

It was some time before the *Cæsar's* boat was enabled to pull up against the tide, wind and sea. When this hard task

was successfully accomplished, the ship filled, passed the *Dublin* and *Elizabeth*, and resumed her place in the line.

Bluewater paced the poop an hour longer, having dismissed his signal-officer and the quartermasters to their hammocks. Even Stowel had turned in, nor did Mr. Bluff deem it necessary to remain on deck any longer. At the end of the hour, the Rear-admiral bethought him of retiring too. Before he quitted the poop, however, he stood at the weather-ladder, holding on to the mizzen rigging and gazing at the scene.

The wind had increased, as had the sea, but it was not yet a gale. The *York* had long before hauled up in her station, a cable's length ahead of the *Cæsar*, and was standing on, under the same canvas as the flag-ship, looking stately and black. The *Dover* was just shooting into her berth, under the standing sailing-orders, at the same distance ahead of the *York*; visible, but much less distinct and imposing. The sloop and the cutter were running along, under the lee of the heavy ships, a quarter of a mile distant, each vessel keeping her relative position, by close attention to her canvas. Farther than this, nothing was in sight. The sea had that wild mixture of brightness and gloom, which belongs to the element when much agitated in a dark night, while the heavens were murky and threatening.

Within the ship, all was still. Here and there a lantern threw a wavering light around, but the shadows of the masts and guns, and other objects, rendered this relief to the night trifling. The lieutenant of the watch paced the weather side of the quarter-deck, silent but attentive. Occasionally he hailed the lookouts and admonished them to be vigilant, also, and at each turn he glanced upward to see how the topsail stood. Four or five old and thoughtful seamen walked the waist and forecastle, but most of the watch were stowed between the guns, or in the best places they could find, under the lee of the bulwarks, catching cat's naps. This was an indulgence denied the young gentlemen, of whom one was on the forecastle, leaning against the mast, dreaming of home, one in the waist, supporting the nettings, and one walking the lee side of the quarter-deck, his eyes shut, his thoughts confused, and his footing uncertain. As Bluewater stepped on the quarter-deck ladder, to descend to his own cabin, the youngster hit his foot against an eye-bolt, and fetched away plump up against his superior. Bluewater caught the lad in his arms and saved him from a fall, setting him fairly on his feet before he let him go.

"'Tis seven bells, Geoffrey," said the Admiral, in an undertone. "Hold on for a half-hour longer, and then go dream of your dear mother."

Before the boy could recover himself to thank his superior, the latter had disappeared.

CHAPTER XX.

"Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint;
As humorous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.
His temper, therefore, must be well observed."
—SHAKESPEARE.

THE reader will remember that the wind had not become fresh when Sir Gervaise Oakes got into his barge with the intention of carrying his fleet to sea. A retrospective glance at the state of the weather will become necessary to the reader, therefore, in carrying his mind back to that precise period whither it has now become our duty to transport him in imagination.

The Vice-admiral governed a fleet on principles very different from those of Bluewater. While the last left so much to the commanders of the different vessels, his friend looked into everything himself. The details of the service he knew were indispensable to success on a larger scale, and his active mind descended into all these minutiæ, to a degree sometimes that annoyed his captains. On the whole, however, he was sufficiently observant of that formidable barrier to excessive familiarity, and that great promoter of heart-burnings in a squadron, naval etiquette, to prevent anything like serious misunderstandings, and the best feelings prevailed between him and the several

magnates under his orders. Perhaps the circumstance that he was a fighting admiral contributed to this internal tranquillity; for it has been often remarked that armies and fleets will both tolerate more in leaders that give them plenty to do with the enemy, than in commanders who leave them inactive and less exposed. The constant encounters with the foe would seem to let out all the superfluous quarrelsome tendencies.

Nelson, to a certain extent, was an example of this influence in the English marine, Suffren * in that of France, and Preble, to a much greater degree than in either of the other cases, in our own. At all events, while most of his captains sensibly felt themselves less of commanders, while Sir Gervaise was on board or around their ships, than when he was in the cabin of the *Plantagenet*, the peace was rarely broken between them, and he was generally beloved as well as obeyed. Blue-water was a more invariable favorite, perhaps, though scarcely as much respected; and certainly not half as much feared.

On the present occasion, the Vice-admiral did not pull through the fleet, without discovering the peculiar propensity to which we have alluded. In passing one of the ships, he made a sign to his cockswain to cause the boat's crew to lay on their oars, when he hailed the vessel, and the following dialogue occurred.

"*Carnatic*, ahoy!" cried the Admiral.

"Sir," exclaimed the officer of the deck, jumping on a quarter-deck gun, and raising his hat.

"Is Captain Parker on board, sir?"

"He is, Sir Gervaise; will you see him, sir?"

A nod of the head sufficed to bring the said Captain Parker on deck, and to the gangway, where he could converse with his superior, without inconvenience to either.

"How do you do, Captain Parker?"—a certain sign Sir Gervaise meant to rap the other over the knuckles, else would it have been "Parker." "How do you do, Captain Parker? I am sorry to see you have got your ship too much down by the head, sir. She'll steer off the wind, like a colt when he first feels the bridle; now with his head on one side, and now on the other. You know I like a compact line, and straight wakes, sir."

"I am well aware of that, Sir Gervaise," returned Parker, a gray-headed, meek old man, who had fought his way up from the forecastle to his present honorable station, and who, though brave as a lion before the enemy, had a particular dread of all his commanders; "but we have been obliged to use more water aft than we could wish, on account of the tiers. We shall coil away the cables anew, and come at some of the leaguers forward, and bring all right again, in a week, I hope, sir."

"A week? the d——l, sir; that will never do, when I expect to see De Vervillin to-morrow. Fill all your empty casks aft with salt-water, immediately; and if that won't do, shift some of your shot forward. I know that craft of yours well; she is tender as a fellow with corns, and the shoe mustn't pinch anywhere."

"Very well, Sir Gervaise; the ship shall be brought in trim, as soon as possible."

"Aye, aye, sir, that is what I expect from every vessel, at all times; and more especially when we are ready to meet an enemy. And I say, Parker,"—making a sign to his boat's crew to stop rowing again—"I say, Parker, I know you love brawn; I'll send you some that Galleygo tells me he has picked up, along-shore here, as soon as I get aboard. The fellow has been robbing all the hen-roosts in Devonshire, by his own account of the matter."

* Suffren, though one of the best sea-captains France ever possessed, was a man of extreme severity and great roughness of manner. Still, he must have been a man of family, as his title of *Bailli* de Suffren was derived from his being a Knight of Malta. It was a singular circumstance connected with the death of this distinguished officer, which occurred not long before the French revolution, that he disappeared in an extraordinary manner, and is buried no one knows where. It is supposed that he was killed by one of his own officers, in a rencontre in the streets of Paris, at night, and that the influence of the friends of the victor was sufficiently great to suppress inquiry. The cause of the quarrel is attributed to harsh treatment in service.

Sir Gervaise waved his hand, Parker smiled and bowed his thanks, and the two parted with feelings of perfect kindness, notwithstanding the little skirmish with which the interview had commenced.

"Mr. Williamson," said Captain Parker to his first lieutenant, on quitting the gangway, "you hear what the commander-in-chief says; and he must be obeyed. I don't think that *Carnatic* would have sheered out of the line, even if she is a little by the head; but have the empty casks filled, and bringing her down six inches more by the stern."

"That's a good fellow, that old Parker," said Sir Gervaise to his purser, whom he was carrying off good-naturedly to the ship, lest he might lose his passage; "and I wonder how he let his ship get her nose under water, in that fashion. I like to have him for a second astern; for I feel sure he'd follow if I stood into Cherbourg, bows on! Yes; a good fellow is Parker; and, Locker"—to his own man, who was also in the boat—"mind you send him two of the best pieces of that brawn—hey! hey! hey! what the d——l has Lord Morganic"—a descendant from royalty by the left hand—"been doing now! The ship is kept like a tailor's lay figure, just to stuff jackets and gimcracks on her—*Achilles*, there!"

A quartermaster ran to the edge of the poop, and then turning he spoke to his captain, who was walking the deck, and informed him that the commander-in-chief hailed the ship. The Earl of Morganic, a young man of four-and-twenty, who had succeeded to the title a few years before by the death of an elder brother—the usual process by which an old peer is brought into the British navy, the work being too discouraging for those who have fortune before their eyes from the start—now advanced to the quarter of the ship, bowed with respectful ease, and spoke with a self-possession that not one of the old commanders of the fleet would have dared to use. In general, this nobleman's intercourse with his superiors in naval rank, betrayed the consciousness of his own superiority in civil rank; but Sir Gervaise being of an old family, and quite as rich as he was himself, the Vice-admiral commanded more of his homage than was customary. His ship was full of "nobs," as they term it in the British navy, or the sons and relatives of nobles; and it was by no means an uncommon thing for her messes to have their jokes at the expense of even flag-officers, who were believed to be a little ignorant of the peculiar sensibilities that are rightly enough imagined to characterize social station.

"Good morning, Sir Gervaise," called out this noble captain; "I'm glad to see you looking so well, after our long cruise in the bay; I intended to have the honor to inquire after your health in person, this morning, but they told me you slept out of the ship. We shall have to hold a court on you, sir, if you fall much into that habit!"

All within hearing smiled, even to the rough old tars, who were astraddle of the yards; and even Sir Gervaise's lip curled a little, though he was not exactly in a joking humor.

"Come, come, Morganic, do you let my habits alone, and look out for your own fore-topmast. Why, in the name of seamanship, is that spar stayed forward in such a fashion, looking like a xebec's foremast?"

"Do you dislike it, Sir Gervaise? Now to our fancies aboard here, it gives the *Achilles* a knowing look, and we hope to set a fashion. By carrying the head-sails well forward, we help the ship round in a sea, you know, sir."

"Indeed, I know no such thing, my lord. What you gain after being taken aback, you lose in coming to the wind. If I had a pair of scales suitable to such a purpose, I would have all that hamper you have stayed away yonder over your bows, on the end of such a long lever, weighed, in order that you might learn what a beautiful contrivance you've invented, among you, to make a ship pitch in a head sea. Why, d——e, if I think you'd lie to, at all, with so much stuff aloft to knock you off the leeward. Come up, everything, forward; come up, everything, my lord, and bring the mast as near perpendicular as possible. It's a hard mat-

ter, I find, to make one of your new-fashioned captains keep things in their places."

"Well, now, Sir Gervaise, I think the *Achilles* makes as good an appearance as most of the other ships; and as to traveling or working, I do not know that she is either dull or clumsy!"

"She's pretty well, Morganic, considering how many Bond Street ideas you have got among you; but she'll never do in a head sea, with that fore-topmast threatening your knight-heads. So get the mast up-and-down, again, as soon as convenient, and come and dine with me, without farther invitation, the first fine day we have at sea. I'm going to send Parker some brawn; but I'll feed you on some of Galleygo's turtle-soup, made out of pigs' heads."

"Thank'ee, Sir Gervaise; we'll endeavor to straighten the stick, since you will have it so; though I confess I get tired of seeing everything to-day just as we had it yesterday."

"Yes, yes; that's the way with the most of these St. James cruisers," continued the Vice-admiral, as he rowed away. "They want a fashionable tailor to rig a man-of-war, as they are rigged themselves. There's my old friend and neighbor, Lord Scupperton—he's taken a fancy to yachting, lately, and when his new brig was put into the water, Lady Scupperton made him send for an upholsterer from town to fit out the cabin; and when the blackguard had surveyed the unfortunate craft, as if it were a country box, what does he do but give an opinion, that 'This here edifice, my lord, in my judgment, should be furnished in cottage style,'—the vagabond!"

This story, which was not particularly original, for Sir Gervaise himself had told it at least a dozen times before, put the Admiral in a good humor, and he found no more fault with his captains, until he reached the *Plantagenet*.

"Daly," said the Earl of Morganic to his first lieutenant, an experienced old Irishman of fifty, who still sung a good song and told a good story, and what was a little extraordinary for either of these accomplishments, knew how to take good care of a ship—"Daly, I suppose we must humor the gentleman, or he'll be quarantining me, and that I shouldn't particularly like on the eve of a general action; so we'll ease off forward and set up the strings aft, again. Hang me if I think he could find it out if we didn't, so long as we kept dead in his wake!"

"That wouldn't be a very safe desait for Sir Jarvy, my lord, for he's a wonderful eye for a rope! Were it Admiral Blue, now, I'd engage to cruise in his company for a week, with my mizzen-mast stowed in the hold, and there should be no bother about the novelty, at all; quite likely he'd be hailing us, and ask, 'What brig's that?' But none of the tricks will answer with t'other, who misses the whipping off the end of a gasket, as soon as any first luff of us all. And so I'll just go about the business in earnest; get the carpenter up with his plumb-bob, and set everything as straight up-and-down as the back of a grenadier."

Lord Morganic laughed, as was usual with him when his lieutenant saw fit to be humorous; and then his caprice in changing the staying of his masts, as well as the order which countermanded it, was forgotten.

The arrival of Sir Gervaise on board his own ship was always an event in the fleet, even though his absence had lasted no longer than twenty-four hours. The effect is like that which is produced on a team of high-mettled cattle, when they feel that the reins are in the hands of an experienced and spirited coachman.

"Good-morning, Greenly; good-morning to you all, gentlemen," said the Vice-admiral, bowing to the quarter-deck in gross, in return for the "present-arms," and rattling of drums, and lowering of hats that greeted his arrival; "a fine day, and it is likely we shall have a fresh breeze. Captain Greenly, your sprit-sail-yard wants squaring by the lifts; and, Bunting, make the *Thunderer's* signal to get her fore-yard in its place, as soon as possible. She's had it down long enough to make a new one, instead of merely fishing it. Are your boats all aboard, Greenly?"

"All but your own barge, Sir Gervaise, and that is hooked on."

"In with it, sir; then trip, and we'll be off. Monsiur de Vervillin has got some mischief in his head, gentlemen, and we must go and take it out of him."

These orders were promptly obeyed; but, as the manner in which the *Plantagenet* passed out of the fleet, and led the other ships to sea, has been already related, it is unnecessary to repeat it. There was the usual bustle, the customary orderly confusion, the winding of calls, the creaking of blocks, and the swinging of yards, ere the vessels were in motion. As the breeze freshened, sail was reduced, as already related, until, by the time the leading ship was ten leagues at sea, all were under short canvas, and the appearance of a windy, if not a dirty night, had set in. Of course, all means of communication between the *Plantagenet* and the vessel still at anchor had ceased, except by sending signals down the line; but to those Sir Gervaise had no recourse, since he was satisfied Bluewater understood his plans, and he then entertained no manner of doubt of his friend's willingness to aid them.

Little heed was taken of anything astern, by those on board the *Plantagenet*. Every one saw, it is true, that ship followed ship in due succession, as long as the movement of those in-shore could be perceived at all; but the great interest centered on the horizon to the southward and the eastward. In that quarter of the channel the French were expected to appear, for the cause of this sudden departure was a secret from no one in the fleet. A dozen of the best lookouts in the ship were kept aloft the whole afternoon, and Captain Greenly, himself, sat in the forward crosstrees, with a glass, for more than an hour, just as the sun was setting, in order to sweep the horizon. Two or three sail were made, it is true, but they all proved to be English coasters: Guernsey or Jerseymen, standing for ports in the west of England, most probably laden with prohibited articles from the country of the enemy. Whatever may be the dislike an Englishman for a Frenchman, he has no dislike to the labor of his hands; and there probably has not been a period since civilization has introduced the art of smuggling among its other arts, when French brandies, and laces, and silks, were not exchanged against English tobacco and guineas, and that in a contraband way, let it be in peace or let it be in war. One of the characteristics of Sir Gervaise Oakes was to despise all petty means of annoyance; usually he disdained even to turn aside to chase a smuggler. Fisherman he never molested at all; and, on the whole, he carried on a marine warfare, a century since, in a way that some of his successors might have imitated to advantage in our own times. Like that high-spirited Irishman, Caldwell,* who conducted a blockade in the Chesapeake, at the commencement of the Revolution, with so much liberality that his enemies actually sent him an invitation to a public dinner. Sir Gervaise knew how to distinguish between the combatant and the non-combatant, and heartily disdained all the money-making parts of his profession, though large sums had fallen into his hands, in this way, as pure godsends.

No notice was taken, therefore, of anything that had not a warlike look; the noble old ship standing steadily on toward the French coast, as the mastiff passes the cur, on his way to encounter another animal, of a mold and courage more worthy of his powers.

"Make nothing of 'em, hey, Greenly?" said Sir Gervaise, as the captain came down from his perch, in consequence of the gathering obscurity of evening, followed by half-a-dozen lieutenants and midshipmen, who had been aloft as volunteers. "Well, we know they cannot yet be to the westward of us, and by standing on shall be certain of heading them off, before this time six months. How beautifully all the ships behave, following each other as accurately as if Bluewater himself was aboard each vessel to con her!"

"Yes, sir, they do keep the line uncom-

* The writer believes this noble-minded sailor to have been the late Admiral Sir Benjamin Caldwell. It is scarcely necessary to say that the invitation could not be accepted, though quite seriously given.

monly well, considering that the tides run in streaks in the channel. I do think if we were to drop a hammock overboard, that the *Carnatic* would pick it up, although she must be quite four leagues astern of us."

"Let old Parker alone for that. I'll warrant you, he is never out of the way. Were it Lord Morganic, now, in the *Achilles*, I should expect him to be away off here on our weather-quarter, just to show us how his ship can eat us out of the wind when he tries; or away down yonder, under our lee, that we might understand how she falls off, when he don't try."

"My lord is a gallant officer, and no bad seaman, for his years, notwithstanding, Sir Gervaise," observed Greenly, who generally took the part of the absent, whenever his superior felt disposed to berate them.

"I deny neither, Greenly, most particularly the first. I know very well, were I to signal Morganic to run into Brest, he'd do it; but whether he would go in ring-tail-boom or jib-boom first, I couldn't tell till I saw it. Now you are a youngish man yourself, Greenly——"

"Every day of eight-and-thirty, Sir Gervaise, and a few months to spare; and I care not if the ladies know it."

"Poh! They like us old fellows, half the time, as well as they do the boys. But you are of an age not to feel time in your bones, and can see the folly of some of our old-fashioned notions, perhaps; though you are not quite as likely to understand the fooleries that have come in, in your own day. Nothing is more absurd than to be experimenting on the settled principles of ships. They are machines, Greenly, and have their laws, just the same as the planets in the heavens. The idea comes from a fish—head, run, and helm; and all we have to do is to study the fishes in order to get the sort of craft we want. If there is occasion for bulk, take the whale, and you get a round bottom, full fore-body, and a clean run. When you want speed, models are plenty—take the dolphin, for instance—and there you find an entrance like a wedge, a lean fore-body, and a run as clean as this ship's decks. But some of our young captains would spoil a dolphin's sailing, if they could breathe under water, so as to get at the poor devils. Look at their fancies! The First Lord shall give one of his cousins a frigate, now, that is molded after nature itself, as one might say; with a bottom that would put a trout to shame. Well, one of the first things the lad does, when he gets on board her, is to lengthen his gaff, perhaps, put a cloth or two in his mizzen, and call it a spanker, settle away the peak till it sticks out over his taffrail like a sign-post, and then away he goes upon a wind, with his helm hard-up, bragging what a weatherly craft he has, and how hard it is to make her even look to leeward."

"I have known such sailors, I must confess, Sir Gervaise; but time cures them of that folly."

"That is to be hoped; for what would a man think of a fish to which nature had fitted a tail athwart-ships, and which was obliged to carry a fin, like a lee-board, under its lee-jaw, to prevent falling off dead before the wind!"

Here Sir Gervaise laughed heartily at the picture of the awkward creature to which his own imagination had given birth; Greenly joining in the merriment, partly from the oddity of the conceit, and partly from the docility with which a commander-in-chief's jokes are usually received. The feeling of momentary indignation which had aroused Sir Gervaise to such an expression of his disgust at modern inventions, was appeased by this little success; and, inviting his captain to supper with him—a substitute for a dinner—he led the way below in high good-humor, Galleygo having just announced that the table was ready.

The *convives* on this occasion were merely the Admiral himself, Greenly, and Atwood. The fare was substantial, rather than scientific; but the service was rich; Sir Gervaise uniformly eating off of plate. In addition to Galleygo, no less than five domestics attended to the wants of the party. As a ship of the *Plantagenet's* size was reasonably steady at all times, a

gale of wind excepted, when the lamps and candles were lighted, and the group was arranged, aided by the admixture of rich furniture with frowning artillery and the other appliances of war, the great cabin of the *Plantagenet* was not without a certain air of rude magnificence. Sir Gervaise kept no less than three servants in livery, as a part of his personal establishment, tolerating Galleygo, and one or two more of the same stamp, as a homage due to Neptune.

The situation not being novel to either of the party, and the day's work having been severe, the first twenty minutes were pretty studiously devoted to the duty of "restoration," as it is termed by the great masters of the science of the table. By the end of that time, however, the glass began to circulate, though moderately, and with it tongues to loosen.

"Your health, Captain Greenly—Atwood, I remember you," said the Vice-admiral, nodding his head familiarly to his two guests, on the eve of tossing off a glass of sherry. "These Spanish wines go directly to the heart, and I only wonder why a people who can make them don't make better sailors."

"In the days of Columbus, the Spaniards had something to boast of in that way, too, Sir Gervaise," Atwood remarked.

"Aye, but that was a long time ago, and they have got bravely over it. I account for the deficiencies of both the French and Spanish marines something in this way, Greenly. Columbus, and the discovery of America, brought ships and sailors into fashion. But a ship without an officer fit to command her, is like a body without a soul. Fashion, however, brought young nobles into their services, and men were given vessels because their fathers were dukes and counts, and not because they knew anything about them."

"Is your own service entirely free from this sort of favoritism?" quietly demanded the captain.

"Far from it, Greenly; else would not Morganic have been made a captain at twenty, and old Parker, for instance, one only at fifty. But, somehow, our classes slide into each other, in a way that neutralizes, in a great degree, the effect of birth. Is it not so, Atwood?"

"Some of our classes, Sir Gervaise, manage to slide into all the best places, if the truth must be said."

"Well, that is pretty bold for a Scotchman!" rejoined the Vice-admiral, good-humoredly. "Ever since the accession of the house of Stuart, we've built a bridge across the Tweed that lets people pass in only one direction. I make no doubt this Pretender's son will bring down half Scotland at his heels, to fill all the berths they may fancy suitable to their merits. It's an easy way of paying bounty—promises."

"This affair in the north, they tell me, seems a little serious," said Greenly. "I believe this is Mr. Atwood's opinion?"

"You'll find it serious enough, if Sir Gervaise's notion about bounty be true," answered the immovable secretary. "Scotia is a small country, but it's well filled with 'braw sperits,' if there's an opening for them to prove it."

"Well, well, this war between England and Scotland is out of place, while we have the French and Spaniards on our hands. Most extraordinary scenes have we had ashore, yonder, Greenly, with an old Devonshire baronet, who slipped and is off for the other world, while we were in his house."

"Magrath has told me something of it, sir; and he tells me the *fill-us null-us*—hang me if I can make out his gibberish, five minutes after it was told to me."

"*Filius nullius*, you mean; nobody's baby—the son of nobody—have you forgotten your Latin, man?"

"Faith, Sir Gervaise, I never had any to forget. My father was a captain of a man-of-war before me, and he kept me afloat from the time I was five, down to the day of his death; Latin was no part of my spoon-meat."

"Aye, aye, my good fellow, I knew your father, and was in the third ship from him, in the action in which he fell," returned the Vice-admiral kindly. "Blue-water was just ahead of him, and we all loved him, as we did an elder brother. You were not promoted then?"

"No, sir; I was only a midshipman, and didn't happen to be in his own ship that day," answered Greenly, sensibly touched with this tribute to his parent's merit; "but I was old enough to remember how nobly you all behaved on the occasion. Well," slyly brushing his eye with his hand, "Latin may do a schoolmaster good, but it is of little use on board ship. I never had but one scholar among all my cronies and intimates."

"And who was he, Greenly? You shouldn't despise knowledge, because you don't understand it. I dare say your intimate was none the worse for a little Latin; enough to go through *nullus, nulla, nullum*, for instance. Who was this intimate, Greenly?"

"John Bluewater; handsome Jack, as he was called; the younger brother of the Admiral. They sent him to sea, to keep him out of harm's way in some love affair; and you may remember that while he was with the Admiral or *Captain* Bluewater, as he was then, I was one of the lieutenants. Although poor Jack was a soldier and in the guards, and he was four or five years my senior, he took a fancy to me, and we became intimate. He understood Latin better than he did his own interests."

"In what did he fail? Bluewater was never very communicative to me about that brother."

"There was a private marriage and cross guardians, and the usual difficulties. In the midst of it all, poor John fell in battle, as you know, and his widow followed him to the grave, within a month or two. 'Twas a sad story all round, and I try to think of it as little as possible."

"A private marriage!" repeated Sir Gervaise, slowly. "Are you quite sure of that? I don't think Bluewater is aware of that circumstance; at least, I never heard him allude to it. Could there have been any issue?"

"No one can know it better than myself, as I helped to get the lady off, and was present at the ceremony. That much I know. Of issue, I should think there was none; though the colonel lived a year after the marriage. How far the Admiral is familiar with all these circumstances I cannot say, as one would not like to introduce the particulars of a private marriage of a deceased brother, to his commanding officer."

"I am glad there was no issue, Greenly—particular circumstances make me glad of that. But we will change the discourse, as these family disasters make one melancholy; and a melancholy dinner is like ingratitude to Him who bestows it."

The conversation now grew general, and in due season, in common with the feast, it ended. After sitting the usual time, the guests retired. Sir Gervaise then went on deck, and paced the poop for an hour, looking anxiously ahead, in quest of the French signal; and, failing of discovering them, he was fain to seek his berth out of sheer fatigue. Before he did this, however, the necessary orders were given; and that to call him, should anything out of the common track occur, was repeated no less than four times.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain!
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the wat'ry plain
The wrecks are all thy deed."—CHILDE HAROLD

It was broad daylight when Sir Gervaise Oakes next appeared on deck. As the scene then offered to his view, as well as the impression it made on his mind, will sufficiently explain to the reader the state of affairs, some six hours later than the time last included in our account, we refer him to those for his own impressions. The wind now blew a real gale, though the season of the year rendered it less unpleasant to the feelings than is usual in wintry tempests. The air was even bland and still charged with the moisture of the ocean; though it came sweeping athwart sheets of foam, with a fury, at moments, which threatened to carry the entire summits of waves miles from their beds in spray. Even the aquatic birds seemed to be terrified, in the instants of the greatest power of the winds, actually wheeling

suddenly on their wings and plunging into the element beneath to seek protection from the maddened efforts of that to which they more properly belonged.

Still, Sir Gervaise saw that his ships bore up nobly against the fierce strife. Each vessel showed the same canvas, namely, a reefed foresail; a similar sail over the quarter-deck, between the mizzen and mainmasts, and a close-reefed main-topsail. Several times that morning, Captain Greenly had thought he should be compelled to substitute a lower surface to the wind than that of the sail last mentioned. As it was an important auxiliary, however, in steadying the ship, and in keeping her under the command of her helm, on each occasion the order had been delayed, until he now began to question whether the canvas could be reduced, without too great a risk to the men whom it would be necessary to send aloft. He had decided to let it stand or blow away, as fortune might decide. Similar reasoning left nearly all the other vessels under precisely the same canvas.

The ships of the Vice-admiral's division had closed in the night, agreeably to an order given before quitting the anchorage, which directed them to come within the usual sailing distance, in the event of the weather's menacing a separation. This command had been obeyed by the ships astern carrying sail hard, long after the leading vessels had been eased by reducing their canvas. The order of sailing was: the *Plantagenet* in the van, and the *Carnatic, Achilles, Thunderer, Blenheim,* and *Warspite* following, in the order named; some changes having been made in the night, in order to bring the ships of the division into their fighting-stations, in a line ahead, the Vice-admiral leading. The superiority of the *Plantagenet* was a little apparent, notwithstanding; the *Carnatic* alone, and that only by means of the most careful watching, being able to keep literally in the commander-in-chief's wake; all the other vessels gradually, but almost imperceptibly, setting to leeward of it.

These several circumstances struck Sir Gervaise, the moment his foot touched the poop, where he found Greenly keeping an anxious lookout on the state of the weather and the condition of his own ship; leaning at the same time against the spanker-boom to steady himself in the gusts of the gale. The Vice-admiral braced his own well-knit and compact frame, by spreading his legs; then he turned his handsome but weather-beaten frame toward the line, scanning each ship in succession, as she lay over to the wind, and came wallowing on, shoving aside vast mounds of water with her bows, her masts describing short arcs in the air, and her hull rolling to windward, and lurching, as if boring her way through the ocean. Galleygo, who never regarded himself as a steward in a gale of wind, was the only other person on the poop, whither he went at pleasure by a sort of imprescriptible right.

"Well done, old *Planter!*" cried Sir Gervaise heartily, as soon as his eye had taken in the leading peculiarities of the view. "You see, Greenly, she has everybody but old Parker to leeward, and she would have him there, too, but he would carry every stick he has out of the *Carnatic,* rather than not keep his berth. Look at Master Morganic; he has his main course close-reefed on the *Achilles,* to luff into his station, and I'll warrant you will get a good six months' wear out of that ship in this one gale; loosening her knees, and jerking her spars like so many whip-handles; and all for love of the new fashion of rigging an English two-decker like an Algerine xebec! Well, let him tug his way up to windward, Bond Street fashion, if he likes the fun. What has become of the *Chloe,* Greenly?"

"Here she is, sir, quite a league on our lee-bow, looking out, according to orders."

"Aye, that is her work, and she'll do it effectually. But I don't see the *Driver!*"

"She's dead ahead, sir," answered Greenly, smiling; "her orders being rather more difficult of execution. Her station would be off yonder to windward, half a league ahead of us; but it's no easy matter to get into that position, Sir Gervaise. when the *Plantagenet* is really in earnest."

Sir Gervaise laughed and rubbed his hands, then he turned to look for the *Active*, the only other vessel of his division. This little cutter was dancing over the seas, half the time under water, notwithstanding, under the head of her mainsail, broad off, on the Admiral's weather-beam; finding no difficulty in maintaining her station there, in the absence of all top-hamper, and favored by the lowness of her hull. After this he glanced upward at the sails and spars of the *Plantagenet*, which he studied closely.

"No signs of De Vervillin, hey, Greenly?" the Admiral asked, when his survey of the whole fleet had ended. "I was in hopes we might see something of him, when the light returned this morning."

"Perhaps it is quite as well as it is, Sir Gervaise," returned the captain. "We could do little besides look at each other, in this gale, and Admiral Bluewater ought to join before I should like even to do that."

"Think you so, Master Greenly? There you are mistaken, then; for I'd lie by him, were I alone in this ship, that I might know where he was to be found as soon as the weather would permit us to have something to say to him."

These words were scarcely uttered, when the lookout in the forward cross-trees, shouted at the top of his voice, "Sail ho!" At the next instant the *Chloe* fired a gun, the report of which was just heard amid the roaring of the gale, though the smoke was distinctly seen floating above the mists of the ocean; she also set a signal at her naked mizzen-topgallant-masthead.

"Run below, young gentleman," said the Vice-admiral, advancing to the break of the poop and speaking to a midshipman on the quarter-deck, "and desire Mr. Bunting to make his appearance. The *Chloe* signals us—tell him not to look for his knee-buckles."

A century since, the last injunction, though still so much in use on shipboard, was far more literal than it is to-day, nearly all classes of men possessing the articles in question, though not invariably wearing them when at sea. The midshipman dove below, however, as soon as the words were out of his superior's mouth; and, in a very few minutes, Bunting appeared, having actually stopped on the main-deck ladder to assume his coat, lest he might too unceremoniously invade the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck, in his shirt-sleeves.

"There it is, Bunting," said Gervaise, handing the lieutenant the glass; "two hundred and twenty-seven—'A large sail ahead,' if I remember right."

"No, Sir Gervaise, 'sails ahead;' the number of them to follow. Hoist the answering flag, quartermaster."

"So much the better! So much the better, Bunting! The number to follow? Well, we'll follow the number, let it be greater or smaller. Come, sirrah, bear a hand up with your answering flag."

The usual signal that the message was understood was now run up between the masts and instantly hauled down again, the flags seen in the *Chloe* descending at the same moment.

"Now for the number of the sails ahead," said Gervaise, as he, Greenly, and Bunting, each leveled a glass at the frigate, on board which the next signal was momentarily expected. "Eleven, by George!"

"No, Sir Gervaise," exclaimed Greenly, "I know better than that. Red above, and blue beneath, with the distinguishing pennant beneath, make fourteen, in our books, now!"

"Well, sir, if they are forty, we'll go nearer and see of what sort of stuff they are made. Show your answering flag, Bunting, that we may know what else the *Chloe* has to tell us."

This was done, the frigate hauling down her signals in haste, and showing a new set as soon as possible.

"What now, Bunting?—what now, Greenly?" demanded Sir Gervaise, a sea having struck the side of the ship and thrown so much spray into his face as to reduce him to the necessity of using his pocket-handkerchief, at the very moment he was anxious to be looking through his glass.

"What do you make of that, gentlemen?"

"I make out the number to be 382," answered Greenly; "but what it means, I know not."

"'Strange sails, *enemies*,'" read Bunting from the book. "Show the answer, quartermaster."

"We hardly wanted a signal for that, Greenly, since there can be no friendly force, here-away; and fourteen sail on this coast always means mischief. What says the *Chloe* next?"

"'Strange sails on the larboard tack, heading as follows.'"

"By George, crossing our course! We shall soon see them from deck. Do the ships astern notice the signals?"

"Every one of them, Sir Gervaise," answered the captain; "the *Thunderer* has just lowered her answering flag, and the *Active* is repeating. I have never seen quartermasters so nimble!"

"So much the better — so much the better — down he comes; stand by for another."

After the necessary pause, the signal to denote the point of the compass was shown from the *Chloe*.

"Heading how, Bunting?" the Vice-admiral eagerly inquired. "Heading how, sir?"

"Northwest and-by-north," or as Bunting pronounced it, "nor-west-and-by-noathe, I believe, sir, no, I am mistaken, Sir Gervaise; it is nor-nor-west."

"Jammed up like ourselves hard on a wind! This gale comes directly from the broad Atlantic, and one party is crossing over to the north and the other to the south shore. We *must* meet, unless one of us run away—hey, Greenly?"

"True enough, Sir Gervaise; though fourteen sail is rather an awkward odds for seven."

"You forget the *Driver* and *Active*, sir; we've nine; nine hearty, substantial British cruisers."

"To wit, six ships of the line, one frigate, a *sloop*, and a *cutter*," laying heavy emphasis on the two last vessels.

"What does the *Chloe* say now, Bunting? That we're enough for the French, although they are two to one?"

"Not exactly that, I believe, Sir Gervaise. 'Five more sail ahead.' They increase fast, sir."

"Aye, at that rate, they may indeed grow too strong for us," answered Sir Gervaise, with more coolness of manner; "nineteen to nine are rather heavy odds. I wish we had Bluewater here!"

"That is what I was about to suggest, Sir Gervaise," observed the captain. "If we had the other division; as some of the Frenchmen are probably frigates and corvettes, we might do better. Admiral Bluewater cannot be far from us; somewhere down here, toward northeast—or nor-nor-east. By wearing round, I think we should make his division in the course of a couple of hours."

"What, and leave to Monsieur de Vervillin the advantage of swearing he frightened us away! No, no, Greenly; we will first pass him fairly and manfully, and that, too, within reach of shot; and then it will be time enough to go round and look after our friends."

"Will not that be putting the French exactly between our two divisions, Sir Gervaise, and give him the advantage of dividing our force? If he stand far, on a nor-nor-west course, I think he will infallibly get between us and Admiral Bluewater."

"And what will he gain by that, Greenly? What, according to your notions of matters and things, will be the great advantage of having an English fleet on each side of him?"

"Not much, certainly, Sir Gervaise," answered Greenly, laughing; "if these fleets were at all equal to his own. But as they will be much inferior to him, the Comte may manage to close with one division, while the other is so far off as to be unable to assist; and one hour of a hot fire may dispose of the victory."

"All this is apparent enough, Greenly; yet I could hardly brook letting the enemy go scatheless. So long as it blows as it does now, there will not be much fighting, and there can be no harm in taking a near look at M. de Vervillin. In half an hour, or an hour at most, we must get a sight of him from off deck, even with this slow headway of the two fleets. Let them

heave the log, and ascertain how fast we go, sir."

"Should we engage the French in such weather, Sir Gervaise," answered Greenly, after giving the order just mentioned, "it would be giving them the very advantage they like. They usually fire at the spars, and one shot would do more mischief, with such a strain on the masts, than half-a-dozen in a moderate blow."

"That will do, Greenly—that will do," said the Vice-admiral, impatiently; "if I didn't so well know you, and hadn't seen you so often engaged, I should think you were afraid of these nineteen sail. You have lectured long enough to render me prudent, and we'll say no more."

Here Sir Gervaise turned on his heel, and began to pace the poop, for he was slightly vexed, though not angered. Such little dialogues often occurred between him and his captain, the latter knowing that his commander's greatest professional failing was excess of daring, while he felt that his own reputation was too well established to be afraid to inculcate prudence. Next to the honor of the flag, and his own, perhaps, Greenly felt the greatest interest in that of Sir Gervaise Oakes, under whom he had served as midshipman, lieutenant, and captain; and this his superior knew, a circumstance that would have excused far greater liberties. After moving swiftly to and fro several times, the Vice-admiral began to cool, and he forgot this passing ebullition of quick feelings. Greenly, on the other hand, satisfied that the just mind of the commander-in-chief would not fail to appreciate facts that had been so plainly presented to it, was content to change the subject. They conversed together in a most friendly manner, Sir Gervaise being even unusually frank and communicative, in order to prove he was not displeased, the matter in discussion being the state of the ship and the situation of the crew.

"You are always ready for battle, Greenly," the Vice-admiral said, smiling, in conclusion, "when there is a necessity; and always just as ready to point out the inexpediency of engaging where you fancy nothing is to be gained by it. You would not have me run away from a shadow, however; or a signal; and that is much the same thing; so we will stand on until we make the Frenchmen fairly from off-deck, when it will be time enough to determine what will come next."

"Sail ho!" shouted one of the lookouts from aloft, a cry that immediately drew all eyes toward the mizzen-topmast-crosstrees, whence the sound proceeded.

The wind blew too fresh to render conversation, even by means of a trumpet, easy, and the man was ordered down to give account of what he had seen. Of course he first touched the poop-deck, where he was met by the Admiral and captain, the officer of the watch, to whom he properly belonged, giving him up to the examination of his two superiors, without a grimace.

"Where-away is the sail you've seen, sir?" demanded Sir Gervaise a little sharply, for he suspected it was no more than one of the ships ahead, already signaled. "Down yonder to the southward and eastward—hey, sirrah?"

"No, Sir Jarvy," answered the topman, hitching his trousers with one hand, and smoothing the hair on his forehead with the other; "but out here, to the nor'ard and west'ard, on our weather-quarter. It's none o' them French chaps as is with the County of Fairvillain"—for so all the common men of the fleet believed their gallant enemy to be rightly named—"but is a square-rigged craft by herself, jammed up on a wind, pretty much like all on us."

"That alters the matter, Greenly! How do you know she is square-rigged, my man?"

"Why, Sir Jarvy, your honor, she's under her fore and main-taw-sails, close-reefed, with a bit of the mainsail set, as well as I can make it out, sir."

"The devil she is! It must be some fellow in a great hurry, to carry that canvas in this blow! Can it be possible, Greenly, that the leading vessel of Bluewater is heaving in sight?"

"I rather think not, Sir Gervaise; it would be too far to windward for any of his two-deckers. It may turn out to be a

lookout ship of the French, got round on the other tack to keep her station, and carrying sail hard, because she dislikes our appearance."

"In that case she must claw well to windward to escape us! What's your name, my lad—Tom Davis, if I'm not mistaken?"

"No, Sir Jarvy, it's Jack Brown; which is much the same, your honor. We's no ways partic'lar about names."

"Well, Jack, does it blow hard aloft? So as to give you any trouble in holding on?"

"Nothing to speak on, Sir Jarvy. A'ter cruising a winter and spring in the Bay of Biscay, I looks on this as no more nor a puff. Half a hand will keep a fellow in his berth, aloft."

"Galleygo, take Jack Brown below to my cabin and give him a fresh nip in his jigger; he'll hold on all the better for it."

This was Sir Gervaise's mode of atoning for the error in doing the man injustice, by supposing he was mistaken about the new sail, and Jack Brown went aloft devoted to the commander-in-chief. It costs the great and powerful so little to become popular, that one is sometimes so surprised to find that any are otherwise; but when we remember that it is also their duty to be just, astonishment ceases; justice being precisely the quality to which a large portion of the human race are most averse.

Half an hour passed, and no further reports were received from aloft. In a few minutes, however, the *Warspite* signaled the Admiral, to report the stranger on her weather-quarter, and, not long after, the *Active* did the same. Still neither told his character; and the course being substantially the same, the unknown ship approached but slowly, notwithstanding the unusual quantity of sail she had set. At the end of the period mentioned, the vessels in the southeastern board began to be visible from the deck. The ocean was so white with foam, that it was not easy to distinguish a ship, under short canvas, at any great distance; but, by the aid of glasses, both Sir Gervaise and Greenly satisfied themselves that the number of the enemy at the southward amounted to just twenty; one more having hove in sight, and been signaled by the *Chloe*, since her first report. Several of these vessels, however, were small, and the Vice-admiral, after a long and anxious survey, lowered his glass and turned to his captain in order to compare opinions.

"Well, Greenly," he asked, "what do you make of them now? According to my reckoning, there are thirteen of the line, two frigates, four corvettes, and a lugger; or twenty sail in all."

"There can be no doubt of the twenty sail, Sir Gervaise, though the vessels astern are still too distant to speak of their size. I rather think it will turn out fourteen of the line and only three frigates."

"That is rather too much for us, certainly, without Bluewater. His five ships, now, and his westerly position, would make a cheering prospect for us. We might stick by Mr. de Vervillin until it moderated, and then pay our respects to him. What do you say to that, Greenly?"

"That is of no great moment, Sir Gervaise, so long as the other division is not with us. But yonder are signals flying on board the *Active*, the *Warspite*, and the *Blenheim*."

"Aye, they've something to tell us of the chap astern and to windward. Come, Bunting, give us the news."

"'Stranger in the northwest shows the *Druid's* number;'" the signal-officer read mechanically from the book.

"The deuce he does! Then Bluewater cannot be far off. Let Dick alone for keeping in his proper place; he has an instinct for a line of battle, and I never knew him fail to be in the very spot I could wish to have him, looking as much at home as if his ships had all been built there! The *Druid's* number! The *Cæsar* and the rest of them are in a line ahead, farther north, heading up well to windward, even of our own wake. This puts the Comte fairly under our lee."

But Greenly was far from being of a temperament as sanguine as that of the Vice-admiral. He did not like the circumstance of the *Druid's* being alone

visible, and she, too, under what, in so heavy a gale, might be deemed a press of canvas. There was no apparent reason for the division's carrying sail so hard, while the frigate would be obliged to do it, did she wish to overtake vessels like the *Plantagenet* and her consorts. He suggested, therefore, the probability that the ship was alone, and that her object might be to speak them.

"There is something in what you say, Greenly," answered Sir Gervaise, after a minute's reflection; "and we must look into it. If Denham doesn't give us anything new from the Count to change our plans, it may be well to learn what the *Druid* is after."

Denham was the commander of the *Chloe*, which ship, a neat six-and-thirty, was pitching into the heavy seas that now came rolling in heavily from the broad Atlantic, the water streaming from her hawse-holes, as she rose from each plunge, like the spouts of a whale. This vessel, it has been stated, was fully a league ahead and to leeward of the *Plantagenet*, and consequently so much nearer to the French, who were approaching from that precise quarter of the ocean, in a long single line, like that of the English, a little relieved, however, by the lookout vessels, all of which, in their case, were sailing along on the weather-beam of their friends. The distance was still so great as to render glasses necessary in getting any very accurate notions of the force and the point of sailing of Monsieur de Vervillin's fleet, the ships astern being yet so remote as to require long practice to speak with any certainty as to their characters. In nothing, notwithstanding, was the superior practical seamanship of the English more apparent than in the manner in which these respective lines were formed. That of Sir Gervaise Oakes was compact, each ship being as near as might be a cable's length distant from her seconds, ahead and astern. This was a point on which the Vice-admiral prided himself; and by compelling his captains rigidly to respect their line of sailing, and by keeping the same ships and officers as much as possible under his orders, each captain of the fleet had got to know his own vessel's rate of speed, and all the other qualities that were necessary to maintain her precise position.

All the ships being weatherly, though some, in a slight degree, were more so than others, it was easy to keep the line in weather like the present, the wind not blowing sufficiently hard to render a few cloths more or less of canvas of any very great moment. If there was a vessel sensibly out of her place, in the entire line, it was the *Achilles;* Lord Morganic not having had time to get all his forward spars as far aft as they should have been; a circumstance that had knocked him off a little more than had happpened to the other vessels. Nevertheless, had an air-line been drawn at this moment, from the mizzen-top of the *Plantagenet* to that of the *Warspite*, it would have been found to pass through the spars of quite half the intermediate vessels, and no one of them all would have been a pistol-shot out of the way. As there were six intervals between the vessels, and each interval, as near as could be guessed at, was a cable's length, the extent of the whole line a little exceeded three-quarters of a mile.

On the other hand, the French, though they preserved a very respectable degree of order, were much less compact, and by no means as methodical in their manner of sailing. Some of their ships were a quarter of a mile to leeward of the line, and the intervals were irregular and ill-observed. These circumstances arose from several causes, neither of which proceeded from any fault in the commander-in-chief, who was both an experienced seaman and a skillful tactician. But his captains were new to each other, and some of them were recently appointed to their ships; it being just as much a matter of course that a seaman should ascertain the qualities of his vessel, by familiarity, as that a man should learn the character of his wife, in the intimacy of wedlock.

At the precise moment of which we are now writing, the *Chloe* might have been about a league from the leading vessel of the enemy, and her position to leeward of

her own fleet threatened to bring her, half an hour later, within range of the Frenchman's guns. This fact was apparent to all in the squadron; still the frigate stood on, having been placed in that station, and the whole being under the immediate supervision of the commander-in-chief.

"Denham will have a warm berth of it, sir, should he stand on much longer," said Greenly, when ten minutes more had passed, during which the ships had gradually drawn nearer.

"I was hoping he might get between the most weatherly French frigate and her line," answered Sir Gervaise; "when I think, by edging rapidly away, we could take her alive, with the *Plantagenet*."

"In which case we might as well clear for action; such a maneuver being certain to bring on a general engagement."

"No, no, I am not quite mad enough for that, Master Telemachus; but we can wait a little longer for the chances. How many flags can you make out among the enemy, Bunting?"

"I see but two, Sir Gervaise; one at the fore, and the other at the mizzen, like our own. I can make out, now, only twelve ships of the line, too; neither of which is a three-decker."

"So much for rumor; as flagrant a liar as ever wagged a tongue! Twelve ships of two decks, and eight frigates, sloops, and luggers. There can be no great mistake in this."

"I think not, Sir Gervaise; their commander-in-chief is in the fourth ship from the head of the line. His flag is just discernible, by means of our best glass. Aye, there goes a signal, this instant, at the end of his gaff!"

"If one could only read French now, Greenly," said the Vice-admiral, smiling; "we might get into some of Mr. de Vervillin's secrets. Perhaps it's an order to go to quarters or to clear; look out sharp, Bunting, for any signs of such a movement. What do you make of it?"

"It's to the frigates, Sir Gervaise; all of which answer, while the other vessels do not."

"We want no French to read that signal, sir," put in Greenly; "the frigates themselves telling us what it means. Monsieur de Vervillin has no idea of letting the *Plantagenet* take anything he has, alive."

This was true enough. Just as the captain spoke, the object of the order was made sufficiently apparent, by all the light vessels to windward of the French fleet bearing up together, until they brought the wind abaft their beams, when away they glided to leeward, like floating objects that have suddenly struck a swift current. Before this change in their course, these frigates and corvettes had been struggling along, the seas meeting them on their weather-bows, at the rate of about two knots or rather less; whereas their speed was now quadrupled, and in a few minutes the whole of them had sailed through the different intervals in their main line, and had formed as before, nearly half a league leeward of it. Here, in the event of an action, their principal duties would have been to succor crippled ships that might be forced out of their allotted stations during the combat. All this Sir Gervaise viewed with disgust. He had hoped that his enemy might have presumed on the state of the elements, and suffered his light vessels to maintain their original positions.

"It would be a great triumph to us, Greenly," he said, "if Denham could pass without shifting his berth. There would be something manly and seamanlike in an inferior fleet's passing a superior, in such a style."

"Yes, sir, though it might cost us a fine frigate. The Count can have no difficulty in fighting his weather main-deck guns, and a discharge from two or three of his leading vessels might cut away some spar that Denham would miss sadly, just at such a moment."

Sir Gervaise placed his hands behind his back, paced the deck a minute, and then said decidedly:

"Bunting, make the *Chloe's* signal to wear—tacking in this sea, and under that short canvas, is out of the question."

Bunting had anticipated this order, and had even ventured clandestinely to direct the quartermasters to bend on the neces-

sary flags; and Sir Gervaise had scarcely got the words out of his mouth, before the signal was abroad. The *Chloe* was equally on the alert; for she too each moment expected the command, and ere her answering flag was seen, her helm was up, the mizzen-staysail down, and her head falling off rapidly toward the enemy. This movement seemed to be expected all round—and it certainly had been delayed to the very last moment—for the leading French ship fell off three or four points, and as the frigate was exactly end-on to her, let fly the contents of all the guns on her forecastle, as well as of those on her main-deck as far aft as they could be brought to bear. One of the topsail-sheets of the frigate was shot away by this rapid and unexpected fire, and some little damage was done to the standing rigging; but luckily, none of immediate moment. Captain Denham was active, and the instant he found his topsail flapping, he ordered it clewed up and the mainsail loosed. The latter was set, close-reefed, as the ship came to the wind on the larboard tack, and by the time everything was braced up and hauled aft, on that tack, the main-topsail was ready to be sheeted home, anew. During the few minutes that these evolutions required, Sir Gervaise kept his eye riveted on the vessel; and when he saw her fairly round and trimmed by the wind again, with the mainsail dragging her ahead, to own the truth, he felt mentally relieved.

"Not a minute too soon, Sir Gervaise," observed the cautious Greenly, smiling. "I should not be surprised if Denham hears more from that fellow at the head of the French line. His weather chase-guns are exactly in a range with the frigate, and the two upper ones might be worked, well enough."

"I think not, Greenly. The forecastle gun, possibly, scarcely anything below it."

Sir Gervaise proved to be partly right and partly wrong. The Frenchman did attempt a fire with his main-deck gun; but, at the first plunge of the ship, a sea slapped up against her weather-bow, and sent a column of water through the port, that drove half its crew into the lee-scuppers. In the midst of this water-spout the gun exploded, the logger-head having been applied an instant before, giving a sort of chaotic wildness to the scene inboard. This satisfied the party below; though that on the forecastle fared better. The last fired their gun several times, and always without success. This failure proceeded from a cause that is seldom sufficiently estimated by nautical gunners; the shot having swerved from the line of sight by the force of the wind against which it flew, two or three hundred feet, by the time it had gone the mile that lay between the vessels. Sir Gervaise anxiously watched the effect of the fire, and perceiving that all the shot fell to leeward of the *Chloe*, he was no longer uneasy about that vessel, and he began to turn his attention to other and more important concerns.

As we are now approaching a moment when it is necessary that the reader should receive some tolerably distinct impression of the relative positions of the two entire fleets, we shall close the present chapter here; reserving the duty of explanation for the commencement of a new one.

CHAPTER XXII.

"All were glad,
And laughed, and shouted, as she darted on,
And plunged amid the foam, and tossed it high,
Over the deck, as when a strong, curbed steed
Flings the froth from him in his eager race."
—PERCIVAL.

THE long twilight of a high latitude had now ended, and the sun, though concealed behind clouds, had risen. The additional light contributed to lessen the gloomy look of the ocean, though the fury of the winds and waves still lent to it a dark and menacing aspect. To windward there were no signs of an abatement of the gale, while the heavens continued to abstain from letting down their floods on the raging waters beneath. By this time, the fleet was materially to the southward of Cape la Hogue, though far to the westward, where the channel received the winds and waves from the whole rake of the Atlantic, and the seas were setting in,

in the long, regular swells of the ocean, a little disturbed by the influence of the tides. Ships as heavy as the two-deckers moved along with groaning efforts, their bulk-heads and timbers "complaining," to use the language of the sea, as the huge masses, loaded with their iron artillery, rose and sunk on the coming and receding billows. But their movements were stately and full of majesty; whereas the cutter, sloop, and even the frigates, seemed to be tossed like foam, very much at the mercy of the elements. The *Chloe* was passing the Admiral on the opposite tack, quite a mile to leeward, and yet, as she mounted to the summit of a wave, her cut-water was often visible nearly to the keel. These are trials of a vessel's strength; for, were a ship always waterborne equally on all her lines, there would not be the necessity which now exists to make her the well-knit mass of wood and iron she is.

The progress of the two fleets was very much the same, both squadrons struggling along through the billows, at the rate of about a marine league in the hour. As no lofty sail was carried, and the vessels were first made in the haze of a clouded morning, the ships had not become visible to each other until nearer than common; and, by the time at which we have now arrived in our tale, the leading vessels were separated by a space that did not exceed two miles, estimating the distance only on their respective lines of sailing; though there would be about the same space between them when abreast, the English being so much to windward of their enemies. Any one in the least familiar with nautical maneuvers will understand that these circumstances would bring the van of the French and the rear of their foes much nearer together in passing, both fleets being close-hauled.

Sir Gervaise Oakes, as a matter of course, watched the progress of the two lines with close and intelligent attention. M. de Vervillin did the same from the poop of *Le Foudroyant*, a noble eighty-gun ship in which the flag of *vice-amiral* was flying, as it might be, in defiance. By the side of the former stood Greenly, Bunting, and Bury, the *Plantagenet's* first lieutenant; by the side of the latter his captaine de vaisseau, a man as little like the caricatures of such officers as a hostile feeling has laid before the readers of English literature, as Washington was like the man held up to odium in the London journals at the commencement of the great American war. M. de Vervillin himself was a man of respectable birth, of a scientific education, and of great familiarity with ships, so far as a knowledge of their general powers and principles are concerned; but here his professional excellence ceased, all that infinity of detail which composes the distinctive merit of the practical seaman being, in a great degree, unknown to him, rendering it necessary for him to think in moments of emergency; periods when the really prime mariner seems more to act by a sort of instinct than any very intelligible process of ratiocination. With his fleet drawn out before him, however, and with no unusual demands on his resources, this gallant officer was an exceedingly formidable foe to contend with in squadron.

Sir Gervaise Oakes lost all his constitutional and feverish impatience while the fleets drew nigher and nigher. As is not unusual among brave men, who are naturally excitable, as the crisis approached he grew calmer, and obtained a more perfect command over himself; seeing all things in their true colors, and feeling more and more equal to control them. He continued to walk the poop, but it was with a slower step; and, though his hands were still closed behind his back, the fingers were passive, while his countenance became grave and his eye thoughtful. Greenly knew that his interference would now be hazardous; for whenever the Vice-admiral assumed that air, he literally became commander-in-chief; and any attempt to control or influence him, unless sustained by the communication of new facts, could only draw down resentment on his own head. Bunting, too, was aware that "the Admiral was aboard," as the officers, among themselves, used to describe this state of their superior's mind, and was prepared to discharge his own duty in the most silent and rapid manner in his power. All

the others present felt more or less of this same influence of an established character.

"Mr. Bunting," said Sir Gervaise when the distance between the *Plantagenet* and *Le Temeraire*, the leading French vessel, might have been about a league, allowing for the distance in the respective lines of sailing — "Mr. Bunting, bend on the signal for the ships to go to quarters. We may as well be ready for any turn of the dice."

No one dared to comment on this order: it was obeyed in readiness and silence.

"Signal ready, Sir Gervaise," said Bunting, the instant the last flag was in its place.

"Run it up at once, sir, and have a bright lookout for the answers. Captain Greenly, go to quarters, and see all clear on the main-deck, to use the batteries if wanted. The people can stand fast below, as I think it might be dangerous to open the ports."

Captain Greenly passed off the poop to the quarter-deck, and in a minute the drum and the fife struck up the air which is known all over the civilized world as the call to arms. In most services this summons is made by the drum alone, which emits sounds to which the fancy has attached peculiar words; those of the soldiers of France being *"Prend ton sac —prend ton sac—prend ton sac,"* no bad representatives of the meaning; but in English and American ships this appeal is usually made in company with the notes of the "ear-piercing fife," which gives it a melody that might otherwise be wanting.

"Signal answered throughout the fleet, Sir Gervaise," said Bunting.

No answer was given to this report beyond a quiet inclination of the head. After a moment's pause, however, the Vice-admiral turned to his signal officer and said:

"I should think, Bunting, no captain can need an order to tell him not to open his lee-lower-deck ports in such a sea as this?"

"I rather fancy not, Sir Gervaise," answered Bunting, looking drolly at the boiling element that gushed up each minute from beneath the bottom of the ship, in a way to appear as high as the hammock-cloths. "The people at the main-deck guns would have rather a wet time of it."

"Bend on the signal, sir, for the ships astern to keep in the Vice-admiral's wake. Young gentleman," to the midshipman who always acted as his aid in battle, "tell Captain Greenly I desire to see him as soon as he has received all the reports."

Down to the moment when the first tap of the drum was heard, the *Plantagenet* had presented a scene of singular quiet and unconcern, considering the circumstances in which she was placed. A landsman could scarcely credit that men could be so near their enemies, and display so much indifference to their vicinity: but this was the result of long habit, and a certain marine instinct that tells the sailor when anything serious is in the wind, and when not. The difference in the force of the two fleets, the heavy gale, and the weatherly position of the English, all conspired to assure the crew that nothing decisive could yet occur.

Here and there an officer or an old seaman might be seen glancing through a port, to ascertain the force and position of the French; but, on the whole, their fleet excited little more attention than if lying at anchor in Cherbourg. The breakfast hour was approaching, and that important event monopolized the principal interest of the moment. The officers' boys, in particular, began to make their appearance around the galley, provided, as usual, with their pots and dishes, and, now and then, one cast a glance through the nearest opening to see how the strangers looked; but, as to warfare, there was much more the appearance of it between the protectors of the rights of the different messes, than between the two great belligerent navies themselves.

Nor was the state of things materially different in the gunroom, or cockpit, or on the orlops. Most of the people of a two-decked ship are berthed on the lower gun deck, and the order to "clear ship,"

is more necessary to a vessel of that construction, before going to quarters seriously, than to smaller craft; though it is usual in all. So long as the bags, mess-chests, and other similar appliances were left in their ordinary positions, Jack saw little reason to derange himself; and as reports were brought below, from time to time, respecting the approach of the enemy, and more especially of his being well to leeward, few of those whose duty did not call them on deck troubled themselves about the matter at all. This habit of considering his fortune as attached to that of his ship, and as regarding himself as a point on her mass, as we all look on ourselves as particles of the orb we accompany in its revolutions, is sufficiently general among mariners; but it was particularly so as respects the sailors of a fleet, who were kept so much at sea, and who had been so often, with all sorts of results, in the presence of the enemy. The scene that was passing in the gunroom at the precise moment at which our tale has arrived, was so characteristic, in particular, as to merit a brief description.

All the idlers by this time were out of their berths and cots; the signs of those who "slept in the country," as it is termed, or who were obliged, for want of state-rooms, to sling in the common apartment having disappeared. Magrath was reading a treatise on medicine, in good Leyden Latin, by a lamp. The purser was endeavoring to decipher his steward's hieroglyphics, favored by the same light, and the captain of marines was examining the lock of an aged musket. The third and fourth lieutenants were helping each other to untangle one of their Bay-of-Biscay reckonings, which had set both plane and spherical trigonometry at defiance, by a lamp of their own; and the chaplain was hurrying the steward and the boys along with the breakfast—his usual occupation at that "witching time" in the morning.

While things were in this state, the first lieutenant, Mr. Bury, appeared in the gunroom. His arrival caused one or two of the mess to glance upward at him, though no one spoke but the junior lieutenant, who being an honorable, was at his ease with every one on board, short of the captain.

"What's the news from deck, Bury?" asked this officer, a youth of twenty, his senior being a man ten years older. "Is Mr. de Vervillin thinking of running away, yet?"

"Not he, sir; there's too much of the game-cock about him for that."

"I'll warrant you he can crow! But what is the news, Bury?"

"The news is that the old *Planter* is as wet as a washing-tub, forward, and I must have a dry jacket—do you hear, there, Tom? Soundings," turning to the master, who just then came in from forward, "have you taken a look out of doors this morning?"

"You know I seldom forget that, Mr. Bury. A pretty pickle the ship would soon be in, if I forgot to look about me!"

"He swallowed the deep-sea, down in the bay," cried the honorable, laughing, "and goes every morning at daylight to look for it out at the bridle-ports."

"Well, then, Soundings, what do you think of the third ship in the French line?" continued Bury, disregarding the levity of the youth: "did you ever see such topmasts, as she carries, before?"

"I scarce ever saw a Frenchman without them, Mr. Bury. You'd have just such sticks in this fleet, if Sir Jarvy would stand them."

"Aye, but Sir Jarvy won't stand them. The captain who sent such a stick up in his ship, would have to throw it overboard before night. I never saw such a pole in the air in my life!"

"What's the matter with the mast, Mr. Bury?" put in Magrath, who kept up what he called constant scientific skirmishes with the elder sea-officers; the junior being too inexperienced, in his view, to be worthy of a contest. "I'll engage the spar is molded and fashioned agreeably to the most approved pheelosophical principles; for in that the French certainly excel us."

"Who ever heard of molding a spar?" interrupted Soundings, laughing loudly, "we mold a ship's frame, Doctor, but we

lengthen and shorten, and scrape and fid her masts."

"I'm answered as usual, gentlemen, and voted down, I suppose, by acclamation, as they call it in other learned bodies. I would advise no creature that has a reason to go to sea; an instinct being all that is needed to make a lord high admiral of twenty tails."

"I should like Sir Jarvy to hear that, my man of books," cried the fourth, who had satisfied himself that a book was not his own forte; "I fancy your instinct, Doctor, will prevent you from whispering this in the Vice-admiral's ear!"

Although Magrath had a profound respect for the commander-in-chief, he was averse to giving in, in a gunroom discussion. His answer, therefore, partook of the feeling of the moment.

"Sir Gervaise" (he pronounced this word Jairvis), "Sir Gervaise Oakes, honorable sir," he said, with a sneer, "may be a good seaman, but he's no linguist. Now, there he was ashore, among the dead and dying, just as ignorant of the meaning of *filius nullius*, which is boy's Latin, as if he had never seen a hornbook! Nevertheless, gentlemen, it is science, and not even the classics, that makes the man; as for a creature's getting the science by instinct, I shall contend it is against the possibilities, whereas the attainment of what you call seamanship is among the lesser probabilities."

"This is the most marine-ish talk I ever heard from your mouth, Doctor," interrupted Soundings. "How the devil can a man tell how to wear ship by instinct, as you call it, if one may ask the question?"

"Simply, Soundings, because the process of ratiocination is dispensed with. Do you have to think in wearing ship, now?—I'll put it to your own honor, for the answer."

"Think! I should be a poor creature for a master, indeed, if much thinking were wanting in so simple a matter as tacking or veering. No, no; your real sea-dog has no occasion for much thinking, when he has his work before him."

"That'll just be it, gentlemen!—that'll be just what I'm telling ye," cried the Doctor, exulting in the success of his artifice. "Not only will Mr. Soundings not think, when he has his ordinary duties to perform, but he holds the process itself in merited contempt, ye'll obsairve; and so my theory is established, by evidence of a pairty concerned; which is more than a postulate logically requires."

Here Magrath dropped his book, and laughed with that sort of hissing sound that seems peculiar to that genus of which he formed a part. He was still indulging in his triumph, when the first tap of the drum was heard. All listened; every ear pricking like that of a deer that hears the hound, when there followed, "R-r-r-ap-tap—r-r-rap-tap—r-r-r-ap-tap a-tap-tap—rap-a-tap—a-rap-a-tap-a-rap-a-tap—a-tap-tap.

"Instinct or reason, Sir Jarvy is going to quarters!" exclaimed the honorable. "I'd no notion we were near enough to the monsieurs, for that!"

"Now," said Magrath, with a grinning sneer, as he rose to descend to the cockpit, "there'll maybe arise an occasion for a little learning, when I'll promise ye all the science that can be mustered in my unworthy knowledge. Soundings, I may have to heave the lead in the depth of your physical formation, in which case I'll just endeevor to avoid the breakers of ignorance."

"Go to the devil, or to the cockpit, whichever you please, sir," answered the master; "I've served in six general actions, already, and have never been obliged to one of your kidney for so much as a bit of court-plaster or lint. With me, oakum answers for one, and canvas for the other."

While this was saying, all hands were in motion. The sea and marine officers looking for their side arms, the surgeon carefully collecting his books, and the chaplain seizing a dish of cold beef, that was hurriedly set upon a table, carrying it down with him to his quarters, by way of taking it out of harm's way. In a minute, the gunroom was cleared of all who usually dwelt there, and their places were supplied by the seamen who manned the three or four thirty-twos that were

mounted in the apartment, together with their opposites. As the sea officers, in particular, appeared among the men their faces assumed an air of authority, and their voices were heard calling out the order to "Tumble up!" as they hastened themselves to their several stations.

All this time Sir Gervaise Oakes paced the poop.

Bunting and the quartermaster were in readiness to hoist the new signal, and Greenly merely waited for the reports, to join the commander-in-chief. In about five minutes after the drum had given its first tap, these were completed, and the captain ascended to the poop.

"By standing on our present course, Captain Greenly," observed Sir Gervaise, anxious to justify to himself the evolution he contemplated, "the rear of our line and the van of the French will be brought within fair range of shot from each other, and by an accident, we might lose a ship; since any vessel that was crippled would necessarily sag directly down upon the enemy. Now, I propose to keep away to the *Plantagenet*, and just brush past the leading French ships, at about the distance the *Warspite* will have to pass, and so alter the face of matters a little. What do you think would be the consequence of such a maneuver?"

"That the van of our line and the van of the French will be brought as near together, as you have just said must happen to the rear, Sir Gervaise, in any case."

"It does not require a mathematician to tell that much, sir. You will keep away as soon as Bunting shows the signal, and bring the wind abeam. Never mind the braces; let them stand fast; as soon as we have passed the French Admiral, I shall luff again. This will cause us to lose a little of our weatherly position, but about that I am very indifferent. Give the order, sir—Bunting, run up the signal."

These commands were silently obeyed, and presently the *Plantagenet* was running directly in the troughs of the seas, with quite double her former velocity. The other ships answered promptly, each keeping away as her second ahead came down to the proper line of sailing, and all complying to the letter with an order that was very easy of execution. The effect, besides giving every prospect of a distant engagement, was to straighten the line to nearly mathematical precision.

"Is it your wish, Sir Gervaise, that we should endeavor to open our lee lower ports?" asked Greenly. "Unless we attempt something of the sort, we shall have nothing heavier than the eighteens to depend on should Monsieur de Vervillin see fit to begin."

"And will he be any better off? It would be next to madness to think of fighting the lower-deck guns in such weather, and we will keep all fast. Should the French commence the sport, we shall have the advantage of being to windward; and the loss of a few weather shrouds might bring down the best mast in their fleet."

Greenly made no answer, though he perfectly understood that the loss of a mast would almost certainly insure the loss of a ship, did one of his own heavier spars go. But this was Sir Gervaise's greatest weakness as a commander, and he knew it would be useless to attempt persuading him to suffer a single ship under his order to pass the enemy nearer than he went himself in the *Plantagenet*. This was what he called covering his ships; though it amounted to no more than putting all of them in the jeopardy that happened to be unavoidable, as regarded one or two.

The Count de Vervillin seemed at a loss to understand this sudden and extraordinary movement in the van of his enemy. His signals followed, and his crews went to their guns; but it was not an easy matter for ships that persevered in hugging the wind to make any material alterations in their relative positions, in such a gale. The rate of sailing of the English, however, now menaced a speedy collision, if collision were intended, and it was time to be stirring, in order to be ready for it.

On the other hand, all was quiet, and, seemingly, deathlike, in the English ships. Their people were at their quarters, al-

ready, and this is a moment of profound stillness in a vessel of war. The lower ports being down, the portions of the crews stationed on those decks were buried, as it might be, in obscurity, while even those above were still partly concealed by the half-ports. There was virtually nothing for the sail-trimmers to do, and everything was apparently left to the evolutions of the vast machines themselves, in which they floated. Sir Gervaise, Greenly, and the usual attendants still remained on the poop, their eyes scarcely turning for an instant from the fleet of the enemy.

By this time the *Plantagenet* and *Le Temeraire* were little more than a mile apart, each minute lessening this distance. The latter ship was struggling along, her bows plunging into the seas to the hawseholes, while the former had a swift, easy motion through the troughs, and along the summits of the waves, her flattened sails aiding in steadying her in the heavy lurches that unavoidably accompanied such a movement. Still a sea would occasionally break against her weather side, sending its crest upward in a brilliant *jet d'eau*, and leaving tons of water on the decks. Sir Gervaise's manner had now lost every glimmering of excitement. When he spoke it was in a gentle, pleasant tone, such as a gentleman might use in the society of women. The truth was, all his energy had concentrated in the determination to do a daring deed; and, as is not unusual with the most resolute men, the nearer he approached to the consummation of his purpose, the more he seemed to reject all the spurious aids of manner.

"The French do not open their lower ports, Greenly," observed the Vice-admiral, dropping the glass after one of his long looks at the enemy, "although they have the advantage of being to leeward. I take that to be a sign they intend nothing very serious."

"We shall know better five minutes hence, Sir Gervaise. This ship slides along like a London coach."

"His line is lubberly, after all, Greenly! Look at those two ships astern: they are nearly half a mile to windward of the rest of the fleet, and at least half a mile astern. Hey, Greenly?"

The captain turned toward the rear of the French, and examined the positions of the two ships mentioned with sufficient deliberation; but Sir Gervaise dropped his head in a musing manner, and began to pace the poop again. Once or twice he stopped to look at the rear of the French line, then distant from him quite a league, and as often did he resume his walk.

"Bunting," said the Vice-admiral, mildly, "come this way a moment. Our last signal was to keep in the commander-in-chief's wake, and to follow his motions?"

"It was, Sir Gervaise. The old order to follow motions, 'with or without signals,' as one might say."

"Bend on the signals to close up in line, as near as safe, and to carry sail by the flag-ship."

"Aye, aye, Sir Gervaise—we'll have 'em both up in five minutes, sir."

The commander-in-chief now even seemed pleased. His physical excitement returned a little, and a smile struggled round his lip. His eye glanced at Greenly, to see if he were suspected, and then all his calmness of exterior returned. In the mean time the signals were made and answered. The latter circumstance was reported to Sir Gervaise, who cast his eyes down the line astern, and saw that the different ships were already bracing in, and easing off their sheets, in order to diminish the spaces between the different vessels. As soon as it was apparent that the *Carnatic* was drawing ahead, Captain Greenly was told to lay his main and fore yards nearly square, to light up all his staysail sheets, and to keep away sufficiently to make everything draw. Although these orders occasioned surprise, they were implicitly obeyed.

The moment of meeting had now come. In consequence of having kept away so much, the *Plantagenet* could not be quite three-fourths of a mile on the weather-bow of *Le Temeraire*, coming up rapidly, and threatning a semi-transverse fire.

In order to prevent this the French ship edged off a little, giving herself an easier and more rapid movement through the water, and bringing her own broadside more fairly to the shock. This evolution was followed by the two next ships, a little prematurely, perhaps; but the admiral in *Le Foudroyant*, disdaining to edge off from her enemy, kept her luff. The ships astern were governed by the course of their superior. This change produced a little disorder in the van of the French, menacing still greater, unless one party or the other receded from the course taken. But time pressed, and the two fleets were closing so fast as to induce other thoughts.

"There's lubberly work for you, Greenly," said Sir Gervaise, smiling. "A commander-in-chief heading up with bowlines dragged, and his second and third ahead—not to say fourth—running off with the wind abeam! Now, if we can knock the Comte off a couple of points in passing, all his fellows astern will follow, and the *Warspite* and *Blenheim* and *Thunderer* will slip by like girls in a country-dance! Send Bury down to the main-deck, with orders to be ready with those eighteens."

Greenly obeyed, of course, and he began to think better of audacity in naval warfare than he had done before that day. This was the usual course of things with these two officers; one arguing and deciding according to the dictates of a cool judgment, and the other following his impulses quite as much as anything else, until facts supervened to prove that human things are as much controlled by adventitious agencies, the results of remote and unseen causes, as by any well-digested plans laid at the moment. In their cooler hours, when they came to reason on the past, the Vice-admiral generally consummated his triumphs, by reminding his captain that if he had not been in the way of luck, he never could have profited by it; no bad creed for a naval officer, who is otherwise prudent and vigilant.

The quartermasters of the fleet were just striking six bells, or proclaiming that it was seven o'clock in the morning watch, as the *Plantagenet* and *Le Temeraire* came abeam of each other. Both ships lurched heavily in the troughs of the seas, and both rolled to windward in stately majesty, and yet both slid through the brine with a momentum that resembled the imperceptible motion of a planet. The water rolled back from their black sides and shining hammock-cloths, and all the other dark panoply that distinguishes a ship-of-war glistened with the spray; but no sign of hostility proceeded from either. The French admiral made no signal to engage, and Sir Gervaise had reasons of his own for wishing to pass the enemy's van, if possible, unnoticed. Minute passed after minute, in breathless silence, on board the *Plantagenet* and the *Carnatic*, the latter vessel being now but half a cable's-length astern of the Admiral. Every eye that had any outlet for such a purpose was riveted on the main-deck ports of *Le Temeraire* in expectation of seeing the fire issue from her guns. Each instant, however, lessened the chances, as regarded that particular vessel, which was soon out of the line of fire from the *Plantagenet*, when the same scene was to follow, with the same result, in connection with *Le Conquereur*, the second ship of the French line. Sir Gervaise smiled as he passed the three first ships seemingly unnoticed; but as he drew nearer to the admiral, he felt confident this impunity must cease.

"What they mean by it all, Greenly," he observed to his companion, "is more than I can say; but we will go nearer, and try to find out. Keep her away a little more, sir; keep her away half a point." Greenly was not disposed to remonstrate now, for his prudent temperament was yielding to the excitement of the moment, just reversing the traits of Sir Gervaise's character; the one losing his extreme discretion in feeling, as the other gained by the pressure of circumstances. The helm was eased a little, and the ship sheered nearer to *Le Foudroyant*.

As is usual in all services, the French commander-in-chief was in one of the best vessels of his fleet. Not only was the *Fou-*

droyant a heavy ship, carrying French forty-twos below, a circumstance that made her rate as an eighty, but, like the *Plantagenet*, she was one of the fastest and most weatherly vessels of her class known. By "hugging the wind," this noble vessel had got, by this time, materially to windward of her second and third ahead, and had increased her distance essentially from her supports astern. In a word, she was far from being in a position to be sustained as she ought to be, unless she edged off herself, a movement that no one on board her seemed to contemplate.

"He's a noble fellow, Greenly, that Comte de Vervillin!" murmured Sir Gervaise, in a tone of admiration, "and so have I always found him, and so have I always reported him, too! The fools about the Gazettes, and the knaves about the offices may splutter as they will; Mr. de Vervillin would give them plenty of occupation were they here. I question if he mean to keep off in the least, but insists on holding every inch he can gain!"

The next moment, however, satisfied Sir Gervaise that he was mistaken in his last conjecture, the bow of the *Foudroyant* gradually falling off, until the line of her larboard guns bore, when she made a general discharge of the whole of them, with the exception of those on the lower deck. The Plantagenets waited until the ship rose on a sea, and then they returned the compliment in the same manner. The *Carnatic's* side showed a sheet of flame immediately after; and the *Achilles*, Lord Morganic, luffing briskly to the wind, so as to bring her guns to bear, followed up the game, like flashes of lightning. All three of these ships had directed their fire at *Le Foudroyant*, and the smoke had not yet driven from among her spars, when Sir Gervaise perceived that all three of her topmasts were hanging to leeward. At this sight, Greenly fairly sprang from the deck, and gave three cheers. The men below caught up the cry, even to those who were, in a manner, buried on the lower deck, and presently, spite of the gale, the Carnatics were heard following their example astern. At this instant the whole French and English lines opened their fire from van to rear, as far as their guns would bear, or the shot tell.

"Now, sir, now is our time to close with De Vervillin!" exclaimed Greenly, the instant he perceived the manner in which his ship was crippled. "In our close order we might hope to make a thorough wreck of him."

"Not so, Greenly," returned Sir Gervaise, calmly. "You see he edges away already, and will be down among his other ships in five minutes; we should have a general action with twice our force. What is done, is well done, and we will let it stand. It is something to have dismasted the enemy's commander-in-chief; do you look to it that the enemy don't do the same with ours. I heard shot rattling aloft, and everything now bears a hard strain."

Greenly went to look after his duty, while Sir Gervaise continued to pace the poop. The whole of *Le Foudroyant's* fire had been directed at the *Plantagenet*, but so rough was the ocean that not a shot touched the hull. A little injury had been done aloft, but nothing that the ready skill of the seamen was not able to repair even in that rough weather. The fact is, most of the shot had touched the waves, and had flown off from their varying surfaces at every angle that offered. One of the secrets that Sir Gervaise had taught his captains was to avoid hitting the surface of the sea, if possible, unless that surface was reasonably smooth, and the object intended to be injured was near at hand. Then the French admiral received the first fire—always the most destructive—of three fresh vessels; and his injuries were in proportion.

The scene was now animated, and not without a wild magnificence. The gale continued as heavy as ever, and with the raging of the ocean, and the howling of the winds, mingled the roar of artillery, and the smoky canopy of battle. Still the destruction on neither side bore any proportion to the grandeur of the accompaniments; the distance and the unsteadiness

of the ships prevented much accuracy of aim. In that day a large two-decked ship never carried heavier metal than an eighteen above her lower batteries; and this gun, efficient as it is on most occasions, does not bring with it the fearful destruction that attends a more modern broadside.

There was a good deal of noise, notwithstanding, and some blood shed in passing; but on the whole, when the *Warspite,* the last of the English ships, ceased her fire, on account of the distance of the enemy abreast of her, it would have been difficult to tell that any vessel but *Le Foudroyant* had been doing more than saluting. At this instant Greenly reappeared on the poop, his own ship having ceased to fire for several minutes.

"Well, Greenly, the main-deck guns are at least scaled," said Sir Gervaise, smiling, "and that is not to be done over again for some time. You keep everything ready in the batteries, I trust?"

"We are all ready, Sir Gervaise, but there is nothing to be done. It would be useless to waste our ammunition at ships quite two miles under our lee."

"Very true—very true, sir. But all the Frenchmen are not quite so far to leeward, Greenly, as you may see by looking ahead. Yonder two, at least, are not absolutely out of harm's way!"

Greely turned, gazed an instant in the direction in which the commander-in-chief pointed, and then the truth of what Sir Gervaise had really in view in keeping away, flashed on his mind, as it might be, at a glance. Without saying a word, he immediately quitted the poop, and descending even to the lower deck, passed through the whole of his batteries, giving his orders, and examining their condition.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there)
Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery—
Their various arms that glitter in the air."
—CHILDE HAROLD.

THE little conflict between the English ships and the head of the French line, the evolution that had grown out of it, the crippling of *Le Foudroyant,* and the continuance of the gale, contributed to produce material changes in the relative positions of the two fleets. All the English vessels kept their stations with beautiful accuracy, still running to the southward in a close line ahead, having the wind a trifle abaft the beam, with their yards braced in. Under the circumstances, it needed but some seven or eight minutes for these ships to glide a mile through the troubled ocean, and this was about the period the most exposed of them all had been under the random and slow fire that the state of the weather permitted. The trifling damages sustained were already repaired, or in a way soon to be so. On the other hand considerable disorder prevailed among the French. Their line had never been perfect, extending quite a league; a few of the leading vessels, or those near the commander-in-chief, sustainng each other as well as could be desired, while long intervals existed between the ships astern. Among the latter, too, as has been stated, some were much farther to windward than the others; an irregularity that proceeded from a desire of the Comte to luff up as near as possible to the enemy—a desire which, practiced on, necessarily threw the least weatherly vessels to leeward. Thus the two ships in the extreme rear, as has been hinted at already, being jammed up unusually hard upon the wind, had weathered materially on their consorts, while their way through the water had been proportionately less. It was these combined circumstances which brought them so far astern and to windward.

At the same time Sir Gervaise pointed out their positions to Greenly, the two vessels just mentioned were quite half a mile to the westward of their nearest consort, and more than that distance to the southward. When it is remembered that the wind was nearly due west, and that all the French vessels, these two excepted, were steering north, the relative positions of the latter will be understood. *Le Foudroyant,* too, had kept away, after the loss of her topmasts, until fairly in the

wake of the ships ahead of her, in her own line, and, as the vessels had been running off with the wind abeam, for several minutes, this maneuver threw the French still farther to leeward. To make the matter worse, just as the *Warspite* drew out of the range of shot from the French, M. de Vervillin showed a signal at the end of his gaff, for his whole fleet to wear in succession; an order which, while it certainly had a gallant semblance, as it was bringing his vessels round on the same tack as his enemy, and looked like a defiance, was singularly adapted to restoring to the latter all the advantage of the wind they had lost by keeping away. As it was necessary to take room to execute this evolution, in order to clear the ships that were now crowded in the van, when *Le Temeraire* came to the wind again on the starboard tack, she was fully half a mile to leeward of the admiral, who had just put his helm up. As a matter of course, in order to form anew, with the heads of the ships to the southward, each vessel had to get into her leader's wake, which would be virtually throwing the whole French line, again, two miles to leeward of the English. Nevertheless, the stragglers in the rear of the French continued to hug the wind, with a pertinacity that denoted a resolution to have a brush with their enemies in passing. The vessels were *Le Scipion* and *La Victoire*, each of seventy-four guns.

The first of these ships was commanded by a young man of very little professional experience, but of high court influence; while the second had a captain who, like old Parker, had worked his way up to his present station through great difficulties, and by dint of hard knocks and harder work. Unfortunately the first ranked; and the humble *capitaine de fregate*, placed by accident in command of a ship of the line, did not dare to desert a *capitaine de vaisseau*, who had a *duc* for an elder brother and called himself *comte*. There was perhaps a redeeming gallantry in the spirit which determined the Comte de Chelincourt to incur the risk of passing so near six vessels with only two, that might throw a veil over the indiscretion; more especially as his own fleet was near enough to support him in the event of any disaster, and it was certainly possible that the loss of a material spar on board either of his foes, might induce the capture of the vessel. At all events, thus reasoned M. de Chelincourt; who continued boldly on, with his larboard tacks aboard, always hugging the wind, even after the *Temeraire* was round; and M. Compant chose to follow him in *La Victoire*. The *Plantagenet*, by this time, being not a mile distant from the *Scipio*, coming on with steady velocity, these intentions and circumstances created every human probability that she would soon be pressing her weather beam within a quarter of a mile, and, consequently, that a cannonade, far more serious than had yet occurred, must follow. The few intervening minutes gave Sir Gervaise time to throw a glance around him, and to come to his final decision.

The English fleet was never in better line than at that precise moment. The ships were as close to each other as comported with safety, and everything stood and drew as in the trade winds. The leading French vessels were wearing and increasing their distance to leeward, and it would require an hour for them to get up near enough to be at all dangerous in such weather, while all the rest were following, regardless of the two that continued their luff. The *Chloe* had already got round, and, hugging the wind, was actually coming up to windward of her own line, though under a press of canvas that nearly buried her. The *Active* and *Driver* were in their stations, as usual; one on the weather beam, and the other on the weather bow; while the *Druid* had got so near as to show her hull, closing fast, with square yards.

"That is either a very bold, or a very obstinate fellow; he, who commands the two ships ahead of us," observed Greenly, as he stood at the Vice-admiral's side, and just as the latter terminated his survey. "What object can he possibly have in braving three times his force in a gale like this?"

"If it were an Englishman, Greenly,

though each shortened sail; the first being already without a topsail.

Their places, however, were immediately supplied by the *Achilles* and the *Thunderer*, both ships having hauled down their staysails to lessen their way. As the *Blenheim* and *Warspite* were quite near astern, and an eighteen pound shot had closed the earthly career of the poor *capitaine de fregate*, his successor in command deemed it prudent to lower his ensign; after a resistance that in its duration was unequal to the promise of its commencement. Still the ship had suffered materially, and had fifty of her crew among the casualties. His submission terminated the combat.

Sir Gervaise Oakes had now leisure and opportunity to look about him. Most of the French ships had got round; but, besides being quite as far astern, when they should get up abeam, supposing himself to remain where he was, they would be at very long gunshot dead to leeward. To remain where he was, however, formed no part of his plan, for he was fully resolved to maintain all his advantages. The great difficulty was to take possession of his prize, the sea running so high as to render it questionable if a boat would live. Lord Morganic, however, was just of an age and a temperament to bring that question to a speedy issue. Being on the weather-beam of *La Victoire*, as her flag came down, he ordered his own first lieutenant into the larger cutter, and putting half a dozen marines, with the proper crew, into the boat, it was soon seen dangling in the air over the caldron of the ocean; the oars on-end. To lower, let go, and unhook, were the acts of an instant; the oars fell, and the boat was swept away to leeward. A commander's commission depended on his success, and Daly made desperate efforts to obtain it. The prize offered a lee, and the French, with a national benevolence, courtesy, and magnanimity that would scarcely have been imitated had matters been reversed, threw ropes to their couquerors, to help to rescue them from a very awkward dilemma. The men did succeed in getting into the prize; but the boat, in the end, was stove and lost.

The appearance of the red flag of England, the symbol of his own professional rank, and worn by most under his own orders, over the white ensign of France, was the sign to Sir Gervaise that the prize-officer was in possession. He immediately made the signal for the fleet to follow the motions of the commander-in-chief. By this time, his own mainsail, close-reefed, had taken the place of the torn topsail, and the *Plantagenet* led off to the southward again, as if nothing unusual had occurred. Daly had a quarter of an hour of extreme exertion on board the prize, before he could get her fairly in motion as he desired; but, by dint of using the ax freely, he cut the wreck adrift, and soon had *La Victoire* liberated from that incumbrance. The foresail and fore and mizzen staysails were on the ship, and the mainsail, close-reefed also, was about to be set, to drag her from the *melee* of her foes, when her ensign came down. By getting the tack of the latter aboard, and the sheet aft, he would have all the canvas set the gale would allow, and to this all-essential point he directed his wits. To ride down the main-tack of a two-decked ship, in a gale of wind, or what fell short of a real gale, was not to be undertaken with twenty men, the extent of Daly's command; and he had recourse to the assistance of his enemies. A good-natured, facetious Irishman, himself, with a smattering of French, he soon got forty or fifty of the prisoners in a sufficient humor to lend their aid, and the sail was set, though not without risk of its splitting. From this moment, *La Victoire* was better off, as respected the gale and keeping a weatherly position, than any of the English ships; inasmuch as she could carry the canvas the wind permitted, while she was relieved from the drift inseparable from hamper aloft. The effect, indeed, was visible in the first hour, to Daly's great delight and exultation. At the end of that period, he found himself quite at cable's-length to windward of the line. But in relating this last particular, events have been a little anticipated.

Greenly, who had gone below to attend to the batteries, which were not worked

without great difficulty in so heavy a sea, and to be in readiness to open the lower ports should occasion offer, reappeared on deck just as the commander-in-chief showed the signal for the ships to follow his own motions. The line was soon formed, as mentioned, and erelong it became apparent that the prize could easily keep in her station. As most of the day was still before him, Sir Gervaise had little doubt of being able to secure the latter, ere night should come to render it indispensable.

The Vice-admiral and his captain shook hands cordially on the poop, and the former pointed out to the latter, with honest exultation, the result of his own bold maneuvers.

"We've clipped the wings of two of them," added sir Gervaise, "and have fairly bagged a third, my good friend; and God willing, when Bluewater joins, there will not be much difficulty with the remainder. I cannot see that any of our vessels have suffered much, and I set them down as sound. There's been time for a signal of inability, that curse to an Admiral's evolutions, but no one seems disposed to make it. If we really escape that nuisance, it will be the first instance in my life!"

"Half-a-dozen yards may be crippled, and no one the worse for it in this heavy weather. Were we under a press of canvas, it would be a different matter; but, now, so long as the main sticks stand, we shall probably do well enough. I can find no injury in my own ship that may not be remedied at sea."

"And she has had the worst of it. 'Twas a decided thing, Greenly, to engage such an odds in a gale; but we owe our success, most probably, to the audacity of the attack. Had the enemy believed it possible, it is probable he would have frustrated it. Well, Master Galleygo, I'm glad to see you unhurt! What is your pleasure?"

"Why, Sir Jarvy, I've two opportunities, as a body might say, on the poop, just now. One is to shake hands, as we always does after a brush, you knows, sir, and to look a'ter each other's health; and the other is to report a misfortin that will bear hard on this day's dinner. You see, Sir Jarvy, I had the dead poultry slung in a net over the live stock, to be out of harm's way; well, sir, a shot cut the lanyard and let all the chickens down by the run, in among the gunroom grunters; and as they never half feeds them hanimals, there isn't as much left of the birds as would make a meal for a sick young gentleman. To my notion, no one ought to have live stock but the commanders-in-chief."

"To the devil with you and the stock! Give me a shake of the hand, and back into your top—how came you, sir, to quit your quarters without leave?"

"I didn't, Sir Jarvy. Seeing how things was agoing on, among the pigs, for our top hoverlooks the awful scene, I axed the young gentleman to let me come down to condole with your honor; and as they always let me do as I axes, in such matters, why down I come. We has had one rattler in at our top, howsever, that came nigh to clear us all out on it!"

"Is any spar injured?" asked Sir Gervaise, quickly. "This must be looked to—hey, Greenly?"

"Not to signify, your honor; not to signify. One of them French eighteens aboard the prize just cocked its nose up, as the ship lurched, and let fly a round 'un and a grist of grape, right into our faces. I see'd it coming and sung out 'Scaldings!' and 'twas well I did. We all ducked in time, and the round 'un cleared everything, but a handful of the marbles are planted in the head of the mast, making the spar look like a plum-pudding, or a fellow with the small-pox."

"Enough of this. You are excused from returning to the top; and, Greenly, beat the retreat. Bunting, show the signal for retreat from quarters. Let the ships pipe to breakfast, if they will."

This order affords a fair picture of the strange admixture of feelings and employments that characterize the ordinary life of a ship. At one moment, its inmates find themselves engaged in scenes of wild magnificence and fierce confusion, while at the next they revert to the most familiar

duties of humanity. The crews of the whole fleet now retired from the guns, and immediately after they were seated around their kids, indulging ravenously in the food for which the exercise of the morning had given keen appetites.

Still there was something of the sternness of battle in the merriment of this meal, and the few jokes that passed were seasoned with a bitterness that is not usual among the light-hearted followers of the sea. Here and there, a messmate was missed, and the vacancy produced some quaint and even pathetic allusion to his habits, or to the manner in which he met his death; seamen usually treating the ravages of this great enemy of the race, after the blow has been struck, with as much solemnity and even tenderness, as they regard his approaches with levity. It is when spared themselves, that they most regard the destruction of battle. A man's standing in a ship, too, carries great weight with it, at such times; the loss of the quartermaster, in particular, being much regretted in the *Plantagenet*. This man messed with a portion of the petty officers, a set of men altogether more thoughtful and grave than the body of the crew; and who met, when they assembled around their mess-chest that morning, with a sobriety and even sternness of mien, that showed how much in the management of the vessel had depended on their individual exertions. Several minutes elapsed in the particular mess of the dead man, before a word was spoken; all eating with appetites that were of proof, but no one breaking the silence. At length an old quarter-gunner, named Tom Sponge, who generally led the discourse, said in a sort of half-inquiring, half-regretting way—

"I suppose there's no great use in asking why Jack Glass's spoon is idle this morning. They says, them forecastle chaps, that they see'd his body streaming out over the starboard quarter, as if it had been the fly of one of his own ensigns. How was it, Ned? you was there-away, and ought to know all about it."

"To be sure I does," said Ned, who was Bunting's remaining assistant. "I was there, as you says, and see'd as much of it as a man can see of what passes between a poor fellow and a shot, when they come together, and that not in a very loving manner. It happened just as we come upon the weather beam of that first chap—him as we winged so handsomely among us. Well, Sir Jarvy had clapped a stopper on the signals, seeing as we had got fairly into the smoke, and Jack and I was looking about for the muskets, not knowing but a chance might turn up to chuck a little lead into some of the parly-woos, and so says Jack, says he, 'Ned, you's got my musket—as I had, sure enough; and says he, 'Ned, you's got my musket; but no matter arter all, as they're much of a muchness.' So when he'd said this, he lets fly; but whether he hit anybody is more than I can say. If he did, 'twas likely a Frenchman, as he shot that way. 'Now,' says Jack, says he, 'Ned, as this is your musket, you can load it, and hand over mine, and I'll sheet home another of the b——s.' Well, at that moment the Frenchman lifted for'ard, on a heavy swell, and let drive at us, with all his forecastle guns, fired as it might be with one priming—"

"That was bad gunnery," growled Tom Sponge, "it racks a ship woundily."

"Yes, they'se no judgment in ships, in general. Well, them French twelves are spiteful guns; and a little afore they fired, it seemed to me I heard something give Jack a rap on the cheek, that sounded as if a fellow's ear was boxed with a clap of thunder. I looked up, and there was Jack streaming out like the fly of the ensign, head foremost, with the body towing after it by strings in the neck."

"I thought when a fellow's head was shot off," put in another quartermaster, named Ben Barrel, "that the body was left in the ship while only the truck went!"

"That comes of not seeing them things, Ben," rejoined the eye-witness. "A fellow's head is stayed in its berth just like a ship's mast. There's for'ard and backstays, and shrouds, all's one as aboard here; the only difference is that the lanyards are a little looser, so as to give a man more play for his head, than it might

be safe to give to a mast. When a fellow makes a bow, why he only comes up a little aft, and bowses on the fore stay, and now and then you falls in with a chap that is stayed altogether too far for'ard, or who's got a list perhaps from having the shrouds set up too taut to port or to starboard."

"That sounds reasonable," put in the quarter-gunner, gravely; "I've seen such drogers myself."

"If you'd been on the poop an hour or two ago, you'd ha' seen more on it! Now there's all our mariners, their backstays have had a fresh pull since they were launched, and as for their captain, I'll warrant you, he had luff upon luff!"

"I've heard the carpenter overhauling them matters," remarked Sam Wad, another quarter-gunner, "and he chalked it all around with a square and compass. It seems reasonable, too."

"If you'd seen Jack's head dragging his body overboard, just like the Frenchman dragging his wreck under his lee, you'd ha' thought it reasonable. What's a fellow's shoulders for, but to give a spread to his shrouds, which lead down to the neck and are set up under the arms somewhere. They says a great deal about the heart, and I reckon it's likely everything is key'd there."

"Harkee, Ned," observed a quartermaster, who knew a little more than the mess generally; "if what you say is true, why don't these shrouds lead straight from the head to the shoulders, instead of being all tucked up under a skin in the neck! Answer me that, now."

"Who the devil ever saw a ship's shrouds that wasn't cat-harpened in!" exclaimed Ned, with some heat. "A pretty hand a wife would make of it, in putting her arms around a fellow's neck, if the rigging spread in the way you mean! Them things is all settled according to reason when a chap's keel's laid."

This last argument seemed to dispose of the matter, the discourse gradually turning on, and confining itself to the merits of the deceased.

Sir Gervaise had directed Galleygo to prepare his breakfast as soon as the people were piped to their own; but he was still detained on deck in consequence of a movement in one of his vessels, to which it has now become necessary more particularly to recur.

The appearance of the *Druid* to the northward, early in the morning, will doubtless be remembered by the reader. When near enough to have it made out, this frigate had shown her number; after which she rested satisfied with carrying sail much harder than any vessel in sight. When the fleets engaged, she made an effort to set the fore-topsail, close-reefed, but several of the critics in the other ships, who occasionally noticed her movements, fancied that some accident must have befallen her, as the canvas was soon taken in, and she appeared disposed to remain content with the sail carried when first seen. As this ship was materially to windward of the line, and she was running at the time a little free, her velocity was much greater than that of the other vessels, and by this time she had got so near that Sir Gervaise observed that she was fairly abeam of the *Plantagenet*, and a little to the leeward of the *Active*. Of course her hull, even to the bottom, as she rose on a sea, was plainly visible, and such of her people as were in the tops and rigging could be easily distinguished by the naked eye.

"The *Druid* must have some communication for us from the other division of the fleet," observed the Vice-admiral to his signal-officer, as they stood watching the movements of the fleet; "it is a little extraordinary Blewet does not signal! Look at the book, and find me a question to put that will ask his errand."

Bunting was in the act of turning over the leaves of his little vocabulary of questions and answers, when three or four dark balls, that Sir Gervaise, by the aid of the glass, saw suspended between the frigate's masts, opened into flags, effectually proving that Blewet was not absolutely asleep.

"Four hundred and sixteen, ordinary communication," observed the Vice-admiral, with his eye still at the glass.

"Look in that, Bunting, and let us know what it means."

"'The commander-in-chief—wish to speak him!'" read Bunting, in the customary formal manner in which he announced the purport of a signal.

"Very well—answer; then make the *Druid's* number to come within hail! The fellow has cloth enough spread to travel two feet to our one; let him edge away and come under our lee. Speaking will be rather close work to-day."

"I doubt if a ship can come near enough to make herself heard," returned the other, "though the second lieutenant of that ship never uses a trumpet in the heaviest weather, they tell me, sir. Our gents say his father was a town-crier, and that he has inherited the family estate."

"Aye, our gents are a set of saucy fellows, as is usually the case when there isn't work enough aboard."

"You should make a little allowance, Sir Gervaise, for being in the ship of a successful commander-in-chief. That makes us all carry weather-helms among the other messes."

"Up with your signal, sir; up with your signal. I shall be obliged to order Greenly to put you upon watch-and-watch for a month, in order to bring you down to the old level of manners."

"Signal answered, already, Sir Gervaise. By the way, sir, I'll thank you to request Captain Greenly to give me another quartermaster. It's nimble work for us when there is anything serious to do."

"You shall have him, Bunting," returned the Vice-admiral, a shade passing over his face for the moment. "I had missed poor Jack Glass, and from seeing a spot of blood on the poop, guessed his fate. I fancied, indeed, I heard a shot strike something behind me."

"It struck the poor fellow's head, sir, and made a noise as if a butcher were felling an ox."

"Well, well, let us try to forget it, until something can be done for his son, who is one of the side boys. Ah! there's Blewet keeping away in earnest. How the deuce he is to speak to us, however, is more than I can tell."

Sir Gervaise now sent a message to his captain to say that he desired his presence. Greenly soon appeared, and was made acquainted with the intention of the *Druid*, as well as with the purport of the last signals. By this time, the rent main-topsail was mended, and the captain suggested it should be set again, close-reefed, as before, and that the mainsail should be taken in. This would lessen the *Plantagenet's* way, which ship was sensibly drawing ahead of her consorts. Sir Gervaise assenting, the change was made, and the effects were soon apparent, not only in the movement of the ship, but in her greater ease and steadiness of motion.

It was not long before the *Druid* was within a hundred fathoms of the flagship, on her weather-quarter, shoving the brine before her in a way to denote a fearful momentum. It was evidently the intention of Captain Blewet to cross the *Plantagenet's* stern, and to luff up under her lee-quarter; the safest point at which he could approach, in so heavy a swell, provided it were done with discretion. Captain Blewet had a reputation for handling his frigate like a boat, and the occasion was one which would be likely to awaken all his desire to sustain the character he had already earned. Still no one could imagine how he was to come near enough to make a communication of any length. The stentorian lungs of the second lieutenant, however, might effect it; and, as the news of the expected hail passed through the ship, many who had remained below, in apathy, while the enemy was close under their lee, came on deck, curious to witness what was about to pass.

"Hey, Atwood!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, for the little excitement had brought the secretary up from the commander-in-chief's cabin; "what is Blewet at? The fellow cannot mean to set a studding-sail?"

"He is running out a boom, nevertheless, Sir Gervaise, or my thirty years' experience of nautical things has been thrown away."

"He is truly rigging out his weather fore-topmast-studding-sail-boom, sir!" added Greenly, in a tone of wonder.

"It *is* out," rejoined the Vice-admiral, as one would give emphasis to the report of a calamity. "Hey! — what? Isn't that a man they're running up to the end of it, Bunting? Level your glass, and let us know at once."

"A glass is not necessary to make out that much, Sir Gervaise. It is a man, beyond a doubt, and there he hangs at the boom-end, as if sentenced by a general court-martial."

Sir Gervaise now suppressed every expression of surprise, and his reserve was imitated, quite as a matter of course, by the twenty officers, who, by this time, had assembled on the poop. The *Druid*, keeping away, approached rapidly, and had soon crossed the flag-ship's wake.

Here she came by the wind, and favored by the momentum with which she had come down, and the addition of the main-sail, drew heavily but steadily up on her lee-quarter. Both vessels being close-hauled, it was not difficult steering; and by watching the helms closely, it would have been possible, perhaps, notwithstanding the heavy sea, to have brought the two hulls within ten yards of each other, and no harm should come of it. This was nearer, however, than it was necessary to approach; the studding-sail-boom, with the man suspended on the end of it, projecting twice that distance, beyond the vessel's bows. Still it was nice work—and while yet some thirty or forty feet from the perpendicular, the man on the boom-end made a sign for attention, swung a coil of line he held, and when he saw hands raised to catch it, he made a cast. A lieutenant caught the rope, and instantly hauled in the slack. As the object was now understood, a dozen others laid hold of the line, and, at a common signal, when those on board the *Plantagenet* hauled in strongly, the people of the *Druid* lowered away. By this simple, but united movement, the man descended obliquely, leaping out of the bowline in which he had sat, and casting the whip adrift. Shaking himself to gain his foot, he raised his cap and bowed to Sir Gervaise, who now saw Wycherly Wychecombe on his poop.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Yet weep not thou—the struggle is not o'er,
O victors of Philippi! many a field
Hath yielded palms to us; one effort more,
By one stern conflict must our fate be sealed."
—MRS. HEMANS.

As soon as the people of the *Plantagenet*, who had so far trespassed on discipline, when they perceived a man hanging at the end of the studding-sail-boom, as to appear in the rigging, on the booms, and on the guns, to watch the result, saw the stranger safely landed on the poop, they lifted their hats and caps, and, as one voice, greeted him with three cheers. The officers smiled at this outbreak of feeling, and the violation of usage was forgotten; the rigid discipline of a man-of-war even giving way occasionally to the sudden impulses of natural feeling.

As the *Druid* approached the flagship, Captain Blewet had appeared in her weather mizzen-rigging, conning his vessel in person; and the order to luff, or keep off, had been given by his own voice, or by a gesture of his own hand. As soon as he saw Wycherly's feet on the poop of the *Plantagenet*, and his active form freed from the double bow line, in which it had been seated, the captain made a wide sweep of the arm, to denote his desire to edge away; the helm of the frigate was borne up hard, and, as the two-decker surged ahead on the bosom of a sea, the *Druid's* bows were knocked off to leeward, leaving a space of about a hundred feet or more, between the two ships, as it might be, in an instant. The same causes continuing to operate, the *Plantagenet* drove still farther ahead, while the frigate soon came to the wind again, a cable's-length to leeward, and abreast of the space between the Admiral and his second astern. Here, Captain Blewet seemed disposed to wait for farther orders.

Sir Gervaise Oakes was not accustomed to betray any surprise he might feel at little events that occurred on duty. He

returned the bow of Wycherly, coolly, and then, without question or play of feature, turned his eyes on the further movements of the *Druid*. Satisfied that all was right with the frigate, he directed the messenger to follow him, and he went below himself, leaving Wycherly to obey as fast as the many inquiries he had to answer as he descended the ladders would allow. Atwood, an interested observer of what had passed, noted that Captain Greenly, of all present, was the only person who seemed indifferent to the nature of the communication the stranger might bring, though perhaps the only one entitled by rank to put an interrogatory.

"You have come aboard of us in a novel and extraordinary mode, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe!" observed the Vice-admiral, a little severely, as soon as he found himself in his own cabin, alone with the lieutenant.

"It was the plan of Captain Blewet, sir, and was really the only one that seemed likely to succeed, for a boat could scarcely live. I trust the success of the experiment, and the nature of the communications I may bring, will be thought sufficient excuses for the want of ceremony."

"It is the first time, since the days of the Conqueror, I fancy, that an English Vice-admiral's ship has been boarded so cavalierly; but, as you say, the circumstances may justify the innovation. What is your errand, sir?"

"This letter, I presume, Sir Gervaise, will explain itself. I have little to say in addition, except to report that the *Druid* has sprung her foremast in carrying sail to close with you, and that we have not lost a moment since Admiral Bluewater ordered us to part company with himself."

"You sailed on board the *Cæsar*, then?" asked Sir Gervaise, a great deal modified by the zeal for service in a youth, situated ashore as he knew Wycherly to be. "You left her with this letter?"

"I did, Sir Gervaise, at Admiral Bluewater's command."

"Did you go aboard the *Druid* boom-fashion, or was that peculiar style reserved for the commander-in-chief?"

"I left the *Cæsar* in a boat, Sir Gervaise; and though we were much nearer in with the coast, where the wind has not the rake it has here, and the strength of the gale had not then come, we were nearly swamped."

"If a true Virginian, you would not have drowned, Wycherly," answered the Vice-admiral, in better humor. "You Americans swim like cork. Excuse me, while I read what Admiral Bluewater has to say."

Sir Gervaise had received Wycherly in the great cabin, standing at the table which was lashed in its center. He would have been puzzled himself, perhaps, to have given the real reason why he motioned to the young man to take a chair, while he went into what he called his "drawing-room;" or the beautiful little apartment between the two staterooms, aft, which was fitted with an elegance that might have been admired in a more permanent dwelling, and whither he always withdrew when disposed to reflection. It was probably connected, however, with a latent apprehension of the Rear-admiral's political bias, for, when by himself, he paused fully a minute before he opened the letter. Condemning this hesitation as unmanly, he broke the seal, however, and read the contents of a letter, which was couched in the following terms:

"My Dear Oakes: Since we parted, my mind has undergone some violent misgivings as to the course duty requires of me, in this great crisis. One hand—one heart—one voice even, may decide the fate of England! In such circumstances, all should listen to the voice of conscience, and endeavor to foresee the consequences of their own acts. Confidential agents are in the west of England, and one of them I have seen. By his communications I find more depends on myself than I could have imagined, and more on the movements of M. de Vervillin. Do not be too sanguine—take time for your own decisions, and grant me time; for I feel like a wretch whose fate must soon be sealed. On no account engage, because you think

this division near enough to sustain you, but at least keep off until you hear from me more positively, or we can meet. I find it equally hard to strike a blow against my rightful prince or to desert my friend. For God's sake act prudently, and depend on seeing me in the course of the next twenty-four hours. I shall keep well to the eastward, in the hope of falling in with you, as I feel satisfied De Vervillin has nothing to do very far west. I may send some verbal message by the bearer, for my thoughts come sluggishly, and with great reluctance. Ever yours,

"RICHARD BLUEWATER."

Sir Gervaise Oakes read this letter twice with great deliberation; then he crushed it in his hand, as one would strangle a deadly serpent. Not satisfied with this manifestation of distaste, he tore the letter into pieces so small as to render it impossible to imagine its contents, opened a cabin-window, and threw the fragments into the ocean. When he fancied that every sign of his friend's weakness had thus been destroyed, he began to pace the cabin in his usual manner. Wycherly heard his step, and wondered at the delay; but his duty compelled him to pass an uncomfortable half-hour in silence, ere the door opened, and Sir Gervaise appeared. The latter had suppressed the signs of distress, though the lieutenant could perceive he was unusually anxious.

"Did the Rear-admiral send any message, Sir Wycherly?" inquired Sir Gervaise; "in his letter he would seem to refer me to some verbal explanations from yourself."

"I am ashamed to say, sir, none that I can render very intelligible. Admiral Bluewater, certainly, did make a few communications that I was to repeat, but when we had parted, by some extraordinary dullness of my own I fear, I find it is out of my power to give them any very great distinctness or connection."

"Perhaps the fault is less your own, sir, than his. Bluewater is addicted to fits of absence of mind, and then he has no reason to complain that others do not understand him, for he does not always understand himself."

Sir Gervaise said this with a little glee, delighted at finding his friend had not committed himself to his messenger. The latter, however, was less disposed to excuse himself by such a process, inasmuch as he felt certain that the Rear-admiral's feelings were in the matter he communicated, let the manner have been what it might.

"I do not think we can attribute anything to Admiral Bluewater's absence of mind, on this occasion, sir," answered Wycherly, with generous frankness. "His feelings appeared to be strongly enlisted in what he said. It might have been owing to the strength of these feelings that he was a little obscure, but it could not have been owing to indifference."

"I shall best understand the matter, then, by hearing what he did say, sir."

Wycherly paused and endeavored to recall what had passed, in a way to make it intelligible.

"I was frequently told to caution you not to engage the French, sir, until the other division had closed, and was ready to assist. But, really, whether this was owing to some secret information that the Rear-admiral had obtained, or to a natural desire to have a share in the battle, is more than I can say."

"Each may have had its influence. Was any allusion made to secret intelligence, that you name it?"

"I never felt more cause to be ashamed of my dullness than at this present moment, Sir Gervaise Oakes," exclaimed Wycherly, who almost writhed under the awkwardness of his situation; for he really began to suspect that his own personal grounds of unhappiness had induced him to forget some material part of his message; "recent events ashore have perhaps disqualified me for this duty."

"It is natural it should be so, my young friend; and as I am acquainted with them all, you can rest satisfied with my indulgence."

"All! no—Sir Gervaise, you know not half; but, I forget myself, sir, and beg your pardon."

"I have no wish to pry into your secrets, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, and we will drop the subject. You may say, however, if the Rear-admiral was in good spirits—as an English seaman is apt to be, with the prospect of a great battle before him."

"I thought not, Sir Gervaise. Admiral Bluewater to me seemed sad, if I may presume to mention it—almost to tears, I thought, sir, once or twice."

"Poor Dick!" mentally ejaculated the Vice-admiral; "he never could have made up his mind to desert me without great anguish of soul. Was there anything said," speaking aloud, "about the fleet of M. de Vervillin?"

"Certainly, a good deal, sir, and yet I am ashamed to say, I scarce know what! Admiral Bluewater appeared to think the Comte de Vervillin had no intention to strike a blow at any of our colonies, and with this he seemed to connect the idea that there would be less necessity for our engaging him. At all events, I cannot be mistaken in his wish that you would keep off, sir, until he could close."

"Aye, and you see how instinctively I have answered to his wishes!" said Sir Gervaise, smiling a little bitterly. "Nevertheless, had the rear of the fleet been up this morning, Sir Wycherly, it might have been a glorious day for England!"

"It has been a glorious day, as it is, sir. We, in the *Druid*, saw it all; and there was not one among us that did not exult in the name of Englishman!"

"What, even to the Virginian, Wychecombe!" rejoined Sir Gervaise, greatly gratified with the natural commendation conveyed in the manner and words of the other, and looking in a smiling, friendly manner at the young man. "I was afraid the hits you got in Devonshire might have induced you to separate your nationality from that of old England."

"Even to the Virginian, Sir Gervaise. You have been in the colonies, sir, and must know we do not merit all that we sometimes receive, on this side of the Atlantic. The king has no subjects more loyal than those of America."

"I am fully aware of it, my noble lad, and have told the king as much with my own mouth. But think no more of this. If your uncle did give you an occasional specimen of true John Bullism, he has left you an honorable title and a valuable estate. I shall see that Greenly finds a berth for you, and you will consent to mess with me, I hope. I trust sometime to see you at Bowldero. At present we will go on deck; and if anything that Admiral Bluewater has said should recur to your mind more distinctly, you will not forget to let me know it."

Wycherly now bowed and left the cabin, while Sir Gervaise sat down and wrote a note to Greenly to request that he would look a little after the comfort of the young man. The latter then went on deck, in person. Although he endeavored to shake off the painful doubts that beset him, and to appear as cheerful as became an officer who had just performed a brilliant exploit, the Vice-admiral found it difficult to conceal the shock he had received from Bluewater's communication. Certain as he felt of striking a decisive blow at the enemy, could he be re-enforced with the five ships of the rear division, he would cheerfully forego the triumph of such additional success, to be certain his friend did not intend to carry his disaffection to overt acts. He found it hard to believe that a man like Bluewater could really contemplate carrying off with him the ships he commanded; yet he knew the authority his friend wielded over his captains, and the possibility of such a step would painfully obtrude itself on his mind, at moments. "When a man can persuade himself into all the nonsense connected with the *jus divinum*," thought Sir Gervaise, "it is doing no great violence to common sense to persuade himself into all its usually admitted consequences." Then, again, would interpose his recollections of Bluewater's integrity and simplicity of character, to reassure him, and give him more cheering hopes for the result. Finding himself thus vacillating between hope and dread, the commander-in-chief determined to drive the matter temporarily from his mind, by bestowing his atten-

tion on the part of the fleet he had with him. Just as this wise resolution was formed, both Greenly and Wycherly appeared on the poop.

"I am glad to see you with a hungry look, Greenly," cried Sir Gervaise, cheerfully; "here has Galleygo just been to report his breakfast, and, as I know your cabin has been put in order since the people left the guns, I hope for the pleasure of your company. Sir Wycherly, my gallant young Virginian, here, will take the third chair, I trust, and then our party will be complete."

The two gentlemen assenting, the Vice-admiral was about to lead the way below, when suddenly arresting his footsteps, on the poop-ladder, he said—

"Did you not tell me, Wychecombe, that the *Druid* had sprung her foremast?"

"Badly, I believe, Sir Gervaise, in the hounds. Captain Blewet carried on his ship fearfully, all night."

"Aye, he's a fearful fellow with spars, that Tom Blewet. I never felt certain of finding all the sticks in their places, on turning out of a morning, when he was with you, as a lieutenant, Greenly. How many jib-booms and topgallant yards did he cost us, in that cruise off the Cape of Good Hope? By George, it must have been a dozen, at least!"

"Not quite as bad as that, Sir Gervaise, though he did expend two jib-booms and three topgallant yards, for me. Captain Blewet has a fast ship, and he wishes people to know it."

"And he has sprung his foremast, and he shall see *I* know it! Harkee, Bunting, make the *Druid's* number to lie by the prize; and when that's answered, tell him to take charge of the Frenchman, and to wait for farther orders. I'll send him to Plymouth to get a new foremast, and to see the stranger in. By the way, does anybody know the name of the Frenchman—hey, Greenly?"

"I cannot tell you, Sir Gervaise, though some of our gentlemen think it is the ship that was the Admiral's second ahead, in our brush off Cape Finisterre. I am not of the same opinion, however; for that vessel had a billet-head, and this has a woman figure-head, that looks a little like a Minerva. The French have a *La Minerve*, I think."

"Not now, Greenly, if this be she, for she is ours." Here Sir Gervaise laughed heartily at his own humor, and all near him joined in, as a matter of course. "But *La Minerve* has been a frigate time out of mind. The Goddess of Wisdom has never been fool enough to get into a line of battle when she has had it in her power to prevent it."

"We thought the figure-head of the prize a Venus, as we passed her with the *Druid*," Wycherly modestly observed.

"There is a way of knowing, and it shall be tried. When you've done with the *Druid*, Bunting, make the prize's signal to repeat her name by telegraph. You know how to make a prize's number, I suppose, when she has none?"

"I confess I do not, Sir Gervaise," answered Bunting, who had shown by his manner that he was at a loss. "Having no number in our books, one would be at a stand how to get at her, sir."

"How would you do it, young man?" asked Sir Gervaise, who all this time was hanging on to the man-rope of the poop-ladder. "Let us see how well you've been taught, sir."

"I believe it may be done in different modes, Sir Gervaise," Wycherly answered, without any appearance of triumph at his superior readiness, "but the simplest I know is to hoist the French flag under the English, by way of saying for whom the signal is intended."

"Do it, Bunting," continued Sir Gervaise, nodding his head as he descended the ladder, "and I warrant you, Daly will answer. What sort of work he will make with the Frenchman's flags, is another matter. I doubt, too, if he had the wit to carry one of our books with him, in which case he will be at a loss to read our signal. Try him, however, Bunting; an Irishman always has something to say, though it be a bull."

This order given, Sir Gervaise descended to his cabin. In half an hour the party was seated at table, as quietly

as if nothing unusual had occurred that day.

"The worst of these little brushes which led to nothing is, that they leave as strong a smell of gunpowder in your cabin, Greenly, as if a whole fleet had been destroyed," observed the Vice-admiral good-humoredly, as he began to help his guests. "I hope the odor we have here will not disturb your appetites, gentlemen."

"You do this day's success injustice, Sir Gervaise, in calling it only a brush," answered the captain, who, to say the truth, had fallen to as heartily upon the delicacies of Galleygo, as if he had not eaten in twenty-four hours. "At any rate, it has brushed the spars out of two of King Louis's ships, and one of them into our hands; aye, and in a certain sense into our pockets."

"Quite true, Greenly—quite true; but what would it have been if——"

The sudden manner in which the commander-in-chief ceased speaking, induced his companions to think that he had met with some accident in eating or drinking; both looked earnestly at him as if to offer assistance. He was pale in the face, but he smiled, and otherwise appeared at his ease.

"It is over, gentlemen," said Sir Gervaise, gently, "we'll think no more of it."

"I sincerely hope you've not been hit, sir?" said Greenly. "I've known men hit, who did not discover that they were hurt until some sudden weakness has betrayed it."

"I believe the French have let me off this time, my good friend; yes, I think Magrath will be plugging no shot-holes in my hull for this affair. Sir Wycherly, those eggs are from your own estate, Galleygo having laid the manor under contribution for all sorts of good things. Try them, Greenly, as coming from our friend's property."

"Sir Wycherly is a lucky fellow in having an estate," said the captain. "Few officers of his rank can boast of such an advantage; though, now and then, an old one is better off."

"That is true enough—hey, Greenly? The army fetches up most of the fortunes; for your rich fellows like good county quarters and county balls. I was a younger brother when they sent me to sea, but I became a baronet, and a pretty warm one too, while yet a reefer. Poor Joselin died when I was only sixteen, and at seventeen they made me an officer."

"Aye, and we like you all the better, Sir Gervaise, for not giving us up when the money came. Now Lord Morganic was a captain when he succeeded, and we think much less of that."

"Morganic remains in service to teach us how to stay topmasts and paint figure-heads," observed Sir Gervaise, a little dryly. "And yet the fellow handled the ship well to-day; making much better weather of it than I feared he would be able to do."

"I hear we are likely to get another duke in the navy, sir; it's not often we catch one of that rank."

Sir Gervaise cared much less for things of this sort than Bluewater, but he naturally cast a glance at the speaker as this was said, as much as to ask whom he meant.

"They tell me, sir, that Lord Montreser, the elder brother of the boy in the *Cæsar*, is in a bad way, and Lord Geoffrey stands next to the succession. I think there is too much stuff in him to quit us now he is almost fit to get his commission."

"True, Bluewater has that boy of high hopes and promises with him, too," answered Sir Gervaise, in a musing manner, unconscious of what he said. "God send he may not forget that, among other things!"

"I don't think rank makes any difference with Admiral Bluewater or Captain Stowel. The nobles are worked up in their ship as well as the humblest reefer of them all. Here is Bunting, sir, to tell us something."

Sir Gervaise started from a fit of abstraction, and, turning, he saw his signal-officer ready to report.

"The *Druid* has answered properly, Sir Gervaise, and has already hauled up so close that I think she will luff through the line, though it may be astern of the *Carnatic*."

"And the prize, Bunting? Have you signaled the prize, as I told you to do?"

"Yes, sir; and she answered so properly that I make no question, the prize-officer took a book with him. The telegraphic signal was answered like the other."

"Well, what does he say? Have you found out the name of the Frenchman?"

"That's the difficulty, sir; we are understood, but Mr. Daly has shown something aboard the prize that the quartermaster swears is a paddy."

"A paddy! What! he hasn't had himself run up at a yardarm, or stun'sail-boom end, has he—hey Wychecombe? Daly's an Irishman, and has only to show himself to show a paddy."

"But this is a sort of an image of some kind or other, Sir Gervaise, and yet it isn't Mr. Daly. I rather think he hasn't the flags necessary for our words, and has rigged out a sort of a woman, to let us know the ship's name; for she has a woman figurehead, you know, sir."

"The devil he has! Well, that will form an era in signals. Galleygo, look out at the cabin windows and let me know if you can see the prize from them—well, sir, what's the news?"

"I sees her, Sir Jarvy," answered the steward, "and I sees her where no French ship as sails in company with British vessels has a right to be. If she's a fathom, your honor, she's fifty to windward of our line? Quite out of her place, as a body might say, and onreasonable."

"That's owing to our having felled the forests of her masts, Mr. Galleygo; every spar that is left helping to put her where she is. That prize must be a weatherly ship, though, hey, Greenly? She and her consort were well to windward of their own line, or we could never have got 'em as we did. These Frenchmen do turn off a weatherly vessel now and then, that we must all admit."

"Yes, Sir Jarvy," put in Galleygo, who never let the conversation flag when he was invited to take a part in it; "yes, Sir Jarvy, and when they've turned 'em off the stocks they turns 'em over to us, commonly, to sail 'em. Building a craft is one piece of knowledge, and 'sailing her well is another."

"Enough of your philosophy, sirrah; look and ascertain if there is anything unusual to be seen hanging in the rigging of the prize. Unless you show more readiness, I'll send one of the Bowlderos to help you."

These Bowlderos were the servants that Sir Gervaise brought with him from his house, having been born on his estate, and educated as domestics in his own, or his father's family; and though long accustomed to a man-of-war, as their ambition never rose above their ordinary service, the steward held them exceedingly cheap. A severer punishment could not be offered him than to threaten to direct one of these common menials to do any duty that in the least pertained to the profession. The present menace had the desired effect, Galleygo losing no time in critically examining th eprize's rigging.

"I calls nothing extr'or'nary in a Frenchman's rigging, Sir Jarvy," answered the steward, as soon as he felt sure of his fact; "their dock-men have idees of their own, as to such things. Now there is som'mat hanging at the lee fore-yardarm of that chap, that looks as if it might be a top-gallant-stun'sail made up to be sent aloft and set, but which stopped when it got as high as it is, on finding out that there's no hamper overhead to spread it to."

"That's it, sir," put in Bunting. "Mr. Daly has run his woman up to the fore-yardarm, like a pirate."

"Woman!" repeated Galleygo, "do you call that 'ere thingummee a woman, Mr. Buntin'? I calls it a bundle of flags, made up to set, if there was anything to set 'em to."

"It's nothing but an Irishwoman, Master Galleygo, as you'll see for yourself, if you'll level this glass at it."

"I'll do that office myself," cried Sir Gervaise. "Have you any curiosity, gentlemen, to read Mr. Daly's signal? Galleygo, open that weather window, and clear away the books and writing-desk, that we may have a look."

The orders were immediately obeyed

and the Vice-admiral was soon seated examining the odd figure that was certainly hanging at the lee fore-yardarm of the prize; a perfect nondescript as regarded all nautical experience.

"Hang me, if I can make anything of it, Greenly," said Sir Gervaise, after a long look. "Do you take this seat, and try your hand at an observation. It resembles a sort of woman, sure enough."

"Yes, sir," observed Bunting, with the earnestness of a man who felt his reputation involved in the issue. "I was certain that Mr. Daly has run up the figure to let us know the name of the prize, and that for want of a telegraph-book to signal the letters; and so I made sure of what I was about, before I took the liberty to come below and report."

"And pray what do you make of it, Bunting? The figure-head might tell us better, but that seems to be imperfect."

"The figure-head has lost all its bust, and one arm, by a shot," said Greenly, turning the glass to the object named; "and I can tell Mr. Daly that a part of the gammoning of his bowsprit is gone, too! The ship requires looking to, Sir Gervaise; she'll have no foremast tomorrow morning, if this wind stand! Another shot has raked the lower side of her foretop, and carried away half the frame. Yes, and there has been a fellow at work, too——"

"Never mind the shot—never mind the shot, Greenly," interrupted the Vice-admiral. "A poor devil like him couldn't have six of us at him, at once, and expect to go 'shot free.' Tell us something of the woman."

"Well, Sir Gervaise, no doubt Daly has hoisted her as a symbol. Aye, no doubt the ship is the *Minerva*, after all, for there's something on the head like a helmet."

"It never can be the *Minerva*," said the Vice-admiral, positively, "for she, I feel certain, is a frigate. Hand me the little book with a red cover, Bunting; that near your hand; it has a list of the enemy's navy. Here it is, '*La Minerve*, 32, *le capitaine de fregate, Mondon*. Built in 1733, old and dull.' That settles the *Minerva*, for this list is the last sent us by the Admiralty."

"Then it must be the *Pallas*," rejoined Greenly, "for she wears a helmet, too, and I am certain there is not only a cap to resemble a helmet, but a Guernsey frock on the body to represent armor. Both *Minerva* and *Pallas*, if I remember right, wore armor."

"This is coming nearer to the point—hey, Greenly?" the Vice-admiral innocently chimed in; "let us look and see if the *Pallas* is a two-decker or not. By George, there's no such name on the list. That's odd, now, that the French should have one of these goddesses and not the other!"

"They never has anything right, Sir Jarvy," Galleygo thrust in, by way of commentary on the Vice-admiral's and the captain's classical lore; "and it's surprising to me that they should have any goddess at all, seeing that they has so little respect for religion, in general."

Wycherly fidgeted, but respect for his superiors kept him silent. As for Bunting, 'twas all the same to him, his father having been a purser in the navy, and he himself educated altogether on board ship, and this, too, a century since.

"It might not be amiss, Sir Gervaise," observed the captain, "to work this rule backward, and just look over the list until we find a two-decked ship that ought to have a woman figure-head, which will greatly simplify the matter. I've known difficult problems solved in that mode."

The idea struck Sir Gervaise as a good one, and he set about the execution of the project in good earnest. Just as he came to *L'Hecate*, 64, an exclamation from Greenly caught his attention, and he inquired its cause.

"Look for yourself, Sir Gervaise; unless my eyes are good for nothing, Daly is running a kedge up alongside of this woman."

"What, a kedge? Aye, that is intended for an anchor, and it means Hope. Everybody knows that Hope carries an anchor—hey, Wychecombe? Upon my word, Daly shows ingenuity. Look for the *Hope*, in that list, Bunting—you will

find the English names printed first, in the end of the book."

"'*The Hope*, or *L'Esperance*,'" read the signal-officer; "36, *lee capitang dee frigate de Courtrait*."

"A single-decked ship after all! This affair is as bad as the d——d *nullus*, ashore there. I'll not be beaten in learning, however, by any Frenchman who ever floated. Go below, Locker, and desire Doctor Magrath to step up here, if he is not occupied with the wounded. He knows more Latin than any man in the ship."

"Yes, Sir Jarvy, but this is French you knows, your honor, and isn't Latin, at all. I expects she'll turn out to have some name as no modest person wishes to use, and we shall have to halter it."

"Aye, he's catted his anchor, sure enough; if the figure be not Hope, it must be Faith, or Charity."

"No fear of them, Sir Jarvy; the French has no faith, nor no charity, no, nor no bowels, as any poor fellow knows as has ever been wrecked on their coast, as once happened to me, when a b'y. I looks upon 'em as no better than so many heatheners, and perhaps that's the name of the ship. I've seen heatheners, a hundred times, Sir Jarvy, in that sort of toggery."

"What, man, did you ever see a heathen with an anchor? one that will weigh three hundred, if it will weigh a pound?"

"Perhaps not, your honor, with a down right hanchor, but with sum'mat like a killog. But that's no hanchor, a'ter all, but only a kedge, catted hanchor fashion, sir."

"Here comes Magrath, to help us out of the difficulty; and we'll propound the matter to him."

The Vice-admiral now explained the whole affair to the surgeon, frankly admitting that the classics of the cabin were at fault, and throwing himself on the gun-room for assistance. Magrath was not a little amused, as he listened, for this was one of his triumphs, and he chuckled not a little at the dilemma of his superiors.

"Well, Sir Jarvis," he answered, "ye might do warse than call a council of war on the matter; but if it's the name ye'll be wanting, I can help ye to that, without the aid of symbols, and signs, and hieroglyphics of any sort. As we crossed the vessel's wake, a couple of hours since, I read it on her stern, in letters of gold. It's *La Victoire*, or the *Victory;* a most unfortunate cognomen for an unlucky ship. She's a French victory, however, ye'll remember, gentlemen!"

"That must be a mistake, Magrath; for Daly has shown an anchor, yonder; and *Victory* carries no anchor."

"It's hard to say, Veece-admiral, one man's victory being another man's defeat. As for Mr. Daly's image, it's just an *Irish* goddess; and allowances must be made for the country."

Sir Gervaise laughed, invited the gentlemen to help demolish the breakfast, and sent orders on deck to hoist the answering flag. At a later day, Daly, when called on for an explanation, asserted that the armor and helmet belonged to *Victory*, as a matter of course; though he admitted that he had at first forgotten the anchor. "But, when I did run it up, they read it aboard the ould *Planter*, as if it had been just so much primer."

CHAPTER XXV.

"There's beauty in the deep:
The wave is bluer than the sky;
And, though the light shines bright on high,
More softly do the sea gems glow
That sparkle in the depths, below;
The rainbow's tints are only made
When on the water they are laid,
And the sun and moon most sweetly shine
Upon the ocean's level brine.
There's beauty in the deep."—BRAINARD.

As Daly was the recognized jester of the fleet, his extraordinary attempt to announce the vessel's name was received as a characteristic joke, and it served to laugh at until something better offered. Under the actual circumstances of the two squadrons, however, it was soon temporarily forgotten in grave things, for few believed the collision that had already taken place was to satisfy a man of the known temperament of the commander-in-chief. As the junction of th

rear division was the only thing wanting to bring on a general engagement, as soon as the weather should moderate a little, every ship had careful lookouts aloft, sweeping the horizon constantly with glasses, more particularly toward the east and northeast. The gale broke about noon, though the wind still continued fresh from the same quarter as before. The sea began to go down, however, and at eight bells material changes had occurred in the situations of both fleets. Some of these it may be necessary to mention.

The ship of the French admiral, *Le Foudroyant,* and *Le Scipion,* had been received, as it might be, in the arms of their own fleet in the manner already mentioned; and from this moment, the movement of the whole force was, in a measure, regulated by that of these two crippled vessels. The former ship, by means of her lower sails, might have continued to keep her station in the line so long as the gale lasted, but the latter unavoidably fell off, compelling her consorts to keep near, or abandon her to her fate. M. de Vervillin preferred the latter course. The consequences were, that by the time the sun was in the zenith, his line, a good deal extended, still, and far from regular, was quite three leagues to leeward of that of the English. Nor was this all: at that important turn in the day, Sir Gervaise Oakes was enabled to make sail on all his ships, setting the fore and mizzen-topsails close-reefed; while *La Victoire,* a fast vessel, was enabled to keep in company by carrying whole courses. The French could not imitate this, inasmuch as one of their crippled vessels had nothing standing but a foremast. Sir Gervaise had ascertained, before the distance became too great for such observations, that the enemy was getting ready to send up new topmasts, and the other necessary spars on board the admiral, as well as jury lower-masts in *Le Scipion;* though the sea would not yet permit any very positive demonstrations to be made toward such an improvement. He laid his own plans for the approaching night accordingly; determining not to worry his people, or notify the enemy of his intentions by attempting any similar improvement in the immediate condition of his prize.

About noon, each ship's number was made in succession, and the question was put if she had sustained any material injury in the late conflict. The answers were satisfactory in general, though one or two of the vessels made such replies as induced the commander-in-chief to resort to a still more direct mode of ascertaining the real condition of his fleet. In order to effect this important object, Sir Gervaise waited two hours longer, for the double purpose of letting all the messes get through with their dinners, and to permit the wind to abate and the sea to fall, as both were now fast doing. At the expiration of that time, however, he appeared on the poop, summoning Bunting to his customary duty.

At 2 P.M. it blew a whole topsail breeze, as it is called; but the sea being still high, and the ships close-hauled, the Vice-admiral did not see fit to order any more sail.

Perhaps he was also influenced by a desire not to increase his distance from the enemy, it being a part of his plan to keep M. de Vervillin in plain sight so long as the day continued, in order that he might have a tolerable idea of the position of his fleet, during the hours of darkness. His present intention was to cause his vessels to pass before him in review, as a general orders his battalions to march past a station occupied by himself and staff, with a view to judge by his own eye of their steadiness and appearance. Vice-admiral Oakes was the only officer in the British navy who ever resorted to this practice; but he did many things of which other men never dreamed, and, among the rest, he did not hesitate to attack double his force, when an occasion offered, as has just been seen. The officers of the fleet called these characteristic reviews "Sir Jarvy's field-days," finding a malicious pleasure in comparing anything out of the common nautical track, to some usage of the soldiers.

Bunting got his orders, notwithstanding the jokes of the fleet; and the neces-

sary signals were made and the answers given. Captain Greenly then received his verbal instructions, when the commander-in-chief went below, to prepare himself for the approaching scene. When Sir Gervaise reappeared on the poop, he was in full uniform, wearing the star of the Bath, as was usual with him on all solemn official occasions. Atwood and Bunting were at his side, while the Bowlderos, in their rich shore-liveries, formed a group at hand. Captain Greenly and his first lieutenant joined the party as soon as their duty with the ship was over. On the opposite side of the poop the whole of the marines off guard were drawn up in triple lines, with their officers at their heads. The ship herself had hauled up her mainsail, hauled down all the staysails, and lay with her main-topsail braced sharp aback, with orders to the quartermaster to keep her a little off the wind; the object being to leave a little way through the water, in order to prolong the expected interviews. With these preparations the commander-in-chief awaited the successive approach of his ships, the sun, for the first time in twenty-four hours, making his appearance in a flood of brilliant summer-light, as if purposely to grace the ceremony.

The first ship that drew near the *Plantagenet* was the *Carnatic*, as a matter of course, she being the next in line. This vessel, remarkable, as the commander-in-chief had observed, for never being out of the way, was not long in closing, though as she luffed up on the Admiral's weather quarter, to pass to windward, she let go all her topsail bowlines, so as to deaden her way, making a sort of half-board. This simple evolution, as she righted her helm, brought her about fifty yards to windward of the *Plantagenet*, past which ship she surged slowly but steadily, the weather now permitting a conversation to be held at that distance, and by means of trumpets, with little or no effort of the voice.

Most of the officers of the *Carnatic* were on her poop as she came sweeping up heavily, casting her shadow on the *Plantagenet's* decks. Captain Parker himself was standing near the ridge-ropes, his head uncovered, and the gray hairs floating in the breeze. The countenance of this simple-minded veteran was a little anxious, for, if he had feared the enemy a tenth part as much as he stood in awe of his commanding officer, he would have been totally unfit for his station. Now he glanced upward at his sails, to see that all was right; then, as he drew nearer, fathom by fathom as it might be, he anxiously endeavored to read the expression of the Vice-admiral's face.

"How do you do, Captain Parker?" commenced Sir Gervaise, with true trumpet formality, making the customary salutation.

"How is Sir Gervaise Oakes to-day? I hope untouched in the late affair with the enemy?"

"Quite well, I thank you, sir. Has the *Carnatic* received any serious injury in the battle?"

"None to mention, Sir Gervaise. A rough scrape of the foremast; but not enough to alarm us, now that the weather has moderated; a little rigging cut, and a couple of raps in the hull."

"Have your people suffered, sir?"

"Two men killed and seven wounded, Sir Gervaise. Good lads, most of 'em; but enough like 'em remain."

"I understand, then, Captain Parker, that you report the *Carnatic* fit for any service?"

"As much so as my poor abilities enable me to make her, Sir Gervaise Oakes," answered the other, a little alarmed at the formality and precision of the question. "Meet her with the helm—meet her with the helm."

All this passed while the *Carnatic* was making her half-board, and, the helm being righted, she now slowly and majestically fell off with her broadside to the Admiral, gathering way as her canvas began to draw again. At this instant, when the yardarms of the two ships were about a few hundred feet asunder, and just as the *Carnatic* drew up fairly abeam, Sir Gervaise Oakes raised his hat, stepped quickly to the side of the poop, waved his hand for silence, and spoke with a di-

tinctness that rendered his words audible to all in both vessels.

"Captain Parker," he said, "I wish, publicly, to thank you for your noble conduct this day. I have always said a surer support could never follow a commander-in-chief into battle; you have more than proved my opinion to be true. I wish, publicly, to thank you, sir."

"Sir Gervaise—I cannot express—God bless you, Sir Gervaise!"

"I have but one fault to find with you, sir, and that is easily pardoned."

"I'm sure I hope so, sir."

"You handled your ship so rapidly and so surely, that we had hardly time to get out of the way of your guns!"

Old Parker could not now have answered had his life depended on it; but he bowed, and dashed a hand across his eyes. There was but a moment to say any more.

"If his Majesty's sword be not laid on your shoulder for this day's work, sir, it shall be no fault of mine," added Sir Gervaise, waving his hat in adieu.

While this dialogue lasted, so profound was the stillness in the two ships, that the wash of the water under the bows of the *Carnatic*, was the only sound to interfere with Sir Gervaise's clarion voice; but the instant he ceased to speak, the crews of both vessels rose as one man and cheered. The officers joined heartily, and to complete the compliment, the commander-in-chief ordered his own marines to present arms to the passing vessel. Then it was that, every sail drawing, again the *Carnatic* took a sudden start and shot nearly her length ahead, on the summit of a sea. In half a minute more, she was ahead of the *Plantagenet's* flying jib-boom-end, steering a little free, so as not to throw the Admiral to leeward.

The *Carnatic* was scarcely out of the way, before the *Achilles* was ready to take her place. This ship, having more room, had easily luffed to windward of the *Plantagenet*, simply letting go her bowlines, as her bows doubled on the Admiral's stern, in order to check her way.

"How do you do to-day, Sir Gervaise?" called out Lord Morganic, without waiting for the commander-in-chief's hail; "allow me to congratulate you, sir, on the exploits of this glorious day!"

"I thank you, my lord, and wish to say I am satisfied with the behavior of your ship. You've all done well, and I desire to thank you all. Is the *Achilles* injured?"

"Nothing to speak of, sir. A little rigging gone, and here and there a stick."

"Have you lost any men, my lord! I desire particularly to know the condition of each ship."

"Some eight or ten poor fellows, I believe, Sir Gervaise; but we are ready to engage this instant."

"It is well, my lord; steady your bowlines, and make room for the *Thunderer*."

Morganic gave the order, but as his ship drew ahead he called out in a pertinacious way, "I hope, Sir Gervaise, you don't mean to give that other lame duck up. I've put my first lieutenant on board one of 'em, and confess to a desire to put a second on board another."

"Aye, aye, Morganic, we knock down the birds, and you bag 'em. I'll give you more sport in the same way, before I've done wid ye."

This little concession, even Sir Gervaise Oakes, a man not accustomed to trifle in matters of duty, saw fit to make to the other's rank; and the *Achilles* withdrew from before the flag-ship, as the curtain is drawn from before the scene.

"I do believe, Greenleaf," observed Lord Morganic to his surgeon, one of his indulged favorites; "that Sir Jarvy is a little jealous of us, because Daly got into the prize before he could send one of his own boats aboard of her. 'Twill tell well in the gazette, will it not? 'The French ship was taken possession of, and brought off, by the *Achilles*, Captain the Earl of Morganic!' I hope the old fellow will have the decency to give us our due. I rather think it was our last broadside that brought the colors down?"

A suitable answer was returned, but as the ship is drawing ahead, we cannot follow her to relate it. The vessel that approached the third, was the *Thunderer*, Captain Foley. This was one of the ships that had received the fire of the three

leading French vessels, after they had brought the wind abeam, and being the leading vessel of the English rear, she had suffered more than any other of the British squadron. The fact was apparent, as she approached, by the manner in which her rigging was knotted, and the attention that had been paid to her spars. Even as she closed, the men were on the yard bending a new main-course, the old one having been hit on the bolt-rope, and torn nearly from the spar. There were also several plugs on her lee-side to mark the spots where the French guns had told.

The usual greetings passed between the Vice-admiral and the captain, and the former put his questions.

"We have not been quite exchanging salutes, Sir Gervaise," answered Captain Foley; "but the ship is ready for service again. Should the wind moderate a little, I think everything would stand to carry sail hard."

"I'm glad to hear it, sir—rejoiced to hear it, sir. I feared more for you, than for any other vessel. I hope you've not suffered materially in your crew?"

"Nine killed, Sir Gervaise; and the surgeon tells me sixteen wounded."

"That proves you've been in port, Foley! Well, I dare say, could the truth be known, it would be found that M. de Vervillin's vessels bear your marks, in revenge. Adieu—adieu—God bless you."

The *Thunderer* glided ahead, making room for the *Blenheim*, Captain Sterling. This was one of your serviceable ships, without any show or style about her; but a vessel that was always ready to give and take. Her commander was a regular sea-dog, a little addicted to hard and outlandish oaths, a great consumer of tobacco and brandy; but who had the discrimination never to swear in the presence of the commander-in-chief, although he had been known to do so in a church; or to drink more than he could well carry, when he was in presence of an enemy or in a gale of wind. He was too firm a man, and too good a seaman, to use the bottle as a refuge; it was the companion of his ease and pleasure, and to confess the truth, he then treated it with an affectionate benevolence, that rendered it exceedingly difficult for others not to entertain some of his own partiality for it. In a word, Captain Sterling was a sailor of the "old school"; for there was an "old school" in manners, habits, opinions, philosophy, morals, and reason, a century since, precisely as there is to-day and probably will be, a century hence.

The *Blenheim* made a good report, not having sustained any serious injury whatever; nor had she a man hurt. The captain reported his ship as fit for service as she was the hour she lifted her anchor.

"So much the better, Sterling—so much the better. You shall take the edge off the next affair, by way of giving you another chance. I rely on the *Blenheim*, and on her captain."

"I thank you, sir," returned Sterling, as his ship moved on; "by the way, Sir Gervaise, would it not be fair-play to rummage the prize's lockers before she gets into the hands of the custom-house? Out here on the high seas, there can be no smuggling in that; there must be good claret aboard her."

"There would be 'plunder of a prize,' Sterling," said the Vice-admiral, laughing, for he knew the question was put more as a joke than a serious proposition; "and that is death without benefit of clergy. Move on; here is Goodfellow close upon your heels."

The last ship in the English line was the *Warspite*, Captain Goodfellow, an officer remarkable in the service at that day, for a "religious turn" as it was called. As is usually the case with men of this stamp, Captain Goodfellow was quiet, thoughtful, and attentive to his duty. There was less of the real tar in him, perhaps, than in some of his companions; but his ship was in good order, always did her duty, and was remarkably attentive to signals; a circumstance that rendered her commander a marked favorite with the Vice-admiral. After the usual questions were put and answered, Sir Gervaise informed Goodfellow that he intended to change the order of sailing so as to bring him near the van.

"We will give old Parker a breathing spell, Goodfellow," added the commander-in-chief, "and you will be my second astern. I must go ahead of you all, or you'll be running down on the Frenchman without orders; pretending you can't see the signals, in the smoke."

The *Warspite* drove ahead, and the *Plantagenet* was now left to receive the prize and the *Druid;* the *Chloe, Driver,* and *Active,* not being included in the signal. Daly had been gradually eating the other ships out of the wind, as has been mentioned already, and when the order was given to pass within hail, he grumbled not a little at the necessity of losing so much of his vantage-ground. Nevertheless, it would not do to joke with the commander-in-chief in a matter of this sort, and he was fain to haul up his courses, and wait for the moment when he might close.

By the time the *Warspite* was out of the way, his ship had drifted down so near the Admiral, that he had nothing to do but to haul aboard his tacks again, and pass as near as was at all desirable. When quite near, he hauled up his mainsail, by order of the Vice-admiral.

"Are you much in want of anything, Mr. Daly?" demanded Sir Gervaise, as soon as the lieutenant appeared forward to meet his hail. "The sea is going down so fast, that we might now send you some boats."

"Many thanks, Sir Gervaise; I want to get rid of a hundred or two Frenchmen, and to have a hundred Englishmen in their places. We are but twenty-one of the king's subjects here, all told."

"Captain Blewet is ordered to keep company with you, sir; and as soon as it is dark, I intend to send you into Plymouth under the frigate's convoy. Is she a nice ship, hey, Daly?"

"Why, Sir Gervaise, she's like a piece of broken crockery, just now, and one can't tell all her merits. She's not a bad goer, and weatherly, I think, all will call her. But she's thundering French inside."

"[illegible]re her English in due time, sir. How are the leaks? do the pumps work freely?"

"Deuce the l'ake has she, Sir Gervaise, and the pumps suck like a nine months' babby. And if they didn't we're scarce the boys to find out the contrary, being but nineteen working hands."

"Very well, Daly; you can haul aboard your maintack, now; remember, you're to go into Plymouth, as soon as it is dark. If you see anything of Admiral Bluewater, tell him I rely on his support, and only wait for his appearance to finish Monsieur de Vervillin's job."

"I'll do all that, with hearty good will, sir. Pray, Sir Gervaise," added Daly, grinning, on the poop of the prize, whither he had got by this time, having walked aft as his ship went ahead, "how do you like French signals? For want of a better, we were driven to the classics?"

"Aye, you'd be bothered to explain all your own flags, I fancy. The name of the ship is the *Victory,* I am told; why did you put her in armor, and whip a kedge up against the poor woman?"

"It's according to the books, Sir Gervaise. Every word of it out of Cicero, and Cordairy, and Cornelius Nepos, and those sort of fellows. O! I went to school, sir, before I went to sea, as you say yourself, sometimes, Sir Gervaise; and literature is the same in Ireland as it is all over the world. *Victory* needs armor, sir, in order to be victorious, and the anchor is to show that she doesn't belong to 'the cut and run' family. I am as sure that all is right, as I ever was of my moods and tenses."

"Very well, Daly," answered Sir Gervaise, laughing; "my lords shall know your merits in that way, and it may get you named a professor—keep your luff, or you'll be down on our sprit-sail-yard; remember and follow the *Druid.*"

Here the gentlemen waved their hands in adieu as usual, and *La Victoire,* clipped as she was of her wings, drew slowly past. The *Druid* succeeded, and Sir Gervaise simply gave Blewet his orders to see the prize into port, and to look after his own foremast. This ended the field-day; the frigate luffing up to windward of the line

again, leaving the *Plantagenet* in its rear. A few minutes later, the latter ship filled and stood after her consorts.

The Vice-admiral having now ascertained in the most direct manner the actual condition of his fleet, had data on which to form his plans for the future. But for the letter from Bluewater, he would have been perfectly happy; the success of the day having infused a spirit into the different vessels, that, of itself, was a pledge of more important results. Still he determined to act as if that letter had never been written, finding it impossible to believe that one who had so long been true, could really fail him in the hour of need. "I know his heart better than he knows it himself," he caught himself mentally exclaiming, "and before either of us is a day older, this will I prove to him, to his confusion and my triumph." He had several short and broken conversations with Wycherly in the course of the afternoon, with a view to ascertain, if possible, the real frame of mind in which his friend had written, but without success, the young man frankly admitting that, owing to a confusion of thought that he modestly attributed to himself, but which Sir Gervaise well knew ought in justice to be imputed to Bluewater, he had not been able to bring away with him any very clear notions of the Rear-admiral's intentions.

In the meanwhile, the elements were beginning to exhibit another of their changeful humors. A gale in summer is seldom of long duration, and twenty-four hours would seem to be the period which Nature had assigned to this. The weather had moderated materially by the time the review had taken place, and five hours later, not only had the sea subsided to a very reasonable swell, but the wind had hauled several points: coming out a fresh topgallant breeze at northwest. The French fleet wore soon after, standing about northeast-by-north, on an easy bowline. They had been active in repairing damages, and the admiral was all a-tanto again, and with everything set that the other ships carried. The plight of *Le Scipion* was not so easily remedied, though even she had two jury-masts rigged, assistance having been sent from the other vessels as soon as boats could safely pass. As the sun hung in the western sky, wanting about an hour of disappearing from one of the long summer days of that high latitude, this ship set a mizzen-topsail in the place of a main, and a fore-topgallant-sail in lieu of a mizzen-topsail. Thus equipped, she was enabled to keep company with her consorts, all of which were under easy canvas, waiting for the night to cover their movements.

Sir Gervaise Oakes had made the signal for his fleet to tack in succession, from the rear to the van, about an hour before the *Le Scipion* obtained this additional sail. The order was executed with great readiness, and, as the ships had been looking up as high as west-southwest before, when they got round, and headed north-northeast, their line of sailing was still quite a league to the windward of that of the enemy. As each vessel filled on the larboard tack, she shortened sail to allow the ships astern to keep away, and close to her station. It is scarcely necessary to say, that this change again brought the *Plantagenet* to the head of the line, with the *Warspite*, however, instead of the *Carnatic*, for her second astern; the latter vessel being quite in the rear.

It was a glorious afternoon, and there was every promise of as fine a night. Still as there were but about six hours of positive darkness at that season of the year, and the moon would rise at midnight, the Vice-admiral knew he had no time to lose, if he would effect anything under the cover of obscurity.

Reefs were no longer used, though all the ships were under short canvas, in order to accommodate their movements to those of the prize. The latter, however, was now in tow of the *Druid*, and as this frigate carried her topgallant-sails, aided by her own courses, *La Victoire* was enabled not only to keep up with the fleet, then under whole topsails, but to maintain her weatherly position. Such was the state of things just as the sun dipped, the enemy being on the lee bow, distant one and a half leagues, when the *Plantag-*

enet showed a signal for the whole fleet to heave to, with the main-topsails to the masts. This command was scarcely executed, when the officers on deck were surprised to hear a boatswain's mate piping away the crew of the Vice-admiral's barge, or that of the boat which was appropriated to the particular service of the commander-in-chief.

"Did I hear aright, Sir Gervaise?" inquired Greenly, with curiosity and interest; "is it your wish to have your barge manned, sir?"

"You heard perfectly right, Greenly; and if disposed for a row this evening, I shall ask the favor of your company. Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, as you are an idler here, I have a flag-officer's right to press you into my service. By the way, Greenly, I have made out and signed an order to this gentleman to report himself to you, as attached to my family, as the soldiers call it; as soon as Atwood has copied it, it will be handed to him, when I beg you will consider him as my first aid."

To this no one could object, and Wycherly made a bow of acknowledgment. At this instant the barge was seen swinging off over the ship's waist, and, at the next, the yard tackles were heard overhauling themselves. The splash of the boat in the water followed. The crew was in her, with oars on end, and poised boat-hooks in another minute. The guard presented, the boatswain piped over, the drum rolled, and Wycherly jumped to the gangway and was out of sight quick as thought. Greenly and Sir Gervaise followed, when the boat shoved off.

Although the seas had greatly subsided and their combs were no longer dangerous, the Atlantic was far from being as quiet as a lake in a summer eventide. At the very first dash of the oars the barge rose on a long, heavy swell that buoyed her up like a bubble, and as the water glided from under her again, it seemed as if she was about to sink into some cavern of the ocean. Few things give more vivid impressions of helplessness than boats thus tossed by the waters when not in their raging humors; for one is apt to expect better treatment than thus to be made the plaything of the element. All, however, who have ever floated on even the most quiet ocean, must have experienced more or less of this helpless dependence, the stoutest boat, impelled by the lustiest crews, appearing half the time like a feather floating in capricious currents of the air.

The occupants of the barge, however, were too familiar with their situation to think much of these matters; and as soon as Sir Gervaise assented to Wycherly's offer to take the tiller, he glanced upward, with a critical eye, in order to scan the *Plantagenet's* appearance.

"That fellow, Morganic, has got a better excuse for his xebec-rig than I had supposed, Greenly," he said, after a minute of observation. "Your fore-topmast is at least six inches too far forward, and I beg you will have it stayed aft to-morrow morning, if the weather permit. None of your Mediterranean craft for me, in the narrow seas."

"Very well, Sir Gervaise; the spar shall be righted in the morning watch," quietly returned the captain.

"Now, there's Goodfellow, half-parson as he is; the man contrives to keep his sticks more upright than any captain in the fleet. You never see a spar half an inch out of its place, on board the *Warspite*."

"That is because her captain trims everything by his own life, sir," rejoined Greenly, smiling. "Were we half as good as he is, in other matters, we might be better than we are in seamanship."

"I do not think religion hurts a sailor, Greenly—no, not in the least. That is to say, when he don't wedge his masts too tight, but leaves play enough for all weathers. There is no cant in Goodfellow."

"Not the least of it, sir, and that it is which makes him so great a favorite. The chaplain of the *Warspite* is of some use; but one might as well have a bowsprit rigged out of a cabin-window, as have our chap."

"Why, we never bury a man, Greenly, without putting him into the water as a

Christian should be," returned Sir Gervaise, with the simplicity of a true believer of the decency school. "I hate to see a seaman tossed into the ocean like a bag of old clothes."

"We get along with that part of the duty pretty well; but before a man is dead, the parson is of opinion that he belongs altogether to the doctor."

"I'd bet a hundred guineas, Magrath has had some influence over him, in this matter—give the *Blenheim* a wider berth, Sir Wycherly, I wish to see how she looks aloft; he's a d—d fellow, that Magrath" —no one swore in Sir Gervaise's boat but himself, when the Vice-admiral's flag was flying in her bows—"and he's just the sort of man to put such a notion into the chaplain's head."

"Why, there, I believe you're more than half right, Sir Gervaise; I overheard a conversation between them one dark night, when they were propping the mizzen-mast under the break of the poop, and the surgeon did maintain a theory very like that you mention, sir."

"Ah! he did, did he? It's just like the Scotch rogue, who wanted to persuade me that your poor uncle, Sir Wycherly, ought not to have been blooded, in as clear a case of apoplexy as ever was met with."

"Well, I didn't think he could have carried his impudence as far as that," observed Greenly, whose medical knowledge was about on par with that of Sir Gervaise. "I didn't think even a doctor would dare to hold such a doctrine! As for the chaplain, to him he laid down the principle that religion and medicine never worked well together. He said religion was an 'alterative,' and would neutralize a salt as quick as fire."

"He's a great vagabond, that Magrath, when he gets hold of a young hand, sir; and I wish with all my heart the Pretender had him, with two or three pounds of his favorite medicines with him—I think, between the two, England might reap some advantage, Greenly. Now, to my notion, Wychecombe, the *Blenheim* would make better weather, if her masts were shortened at least two feet."

"Perhaps, she might, Sir Gervaise; but would she be as certain a ship, in coming into action in light winds and at critical moments?"

"Umph! It's time for us old fellows to look about us, Greenly, when the boys begin to reason on a line of battle! Don't blush, Wychecombe; don't blush. Your remark was sensible, and shows reflection. No country can ever have a powerful marine, or one likely to produce much influence in her wars, that does not pay rigid attention to the tactics of fleets. Your frigate actions, and sailing of single ships, are well enough as drill; but the great practice must be in squadron. Ten heavy ships, in good fleet discipline, and kept at sea, will do more than a hundred single cruisers, in establishing and maintaining discipline; and it is only by using vessels together, that we find out what both ships and men can do. Now, we owe the success of this day to our practice of sailing in close order, and in knowing how to keep our stations—else would six ships never have been able to carry away the palm of victory from twelve—palm! aye, that's the very word, Greenly, I was trying to think of this morning. Daly's paddy should have had a palm-branch in its hand, as an emblem of victory."

CHAPTER XXVI.

"He that has sailed upon the dark-blue sea,
Has viewed at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;
Mast, spires, and strand retiring to the sight,
The glorious main, expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailor wearing bravely now,
So gayly curl the waves before each dashing prow."
—BYRON.

As Sir Gervaise Oakes's active mind was liable to such sudden mutations of thought as that described in the close of the last chapter, Greenly neither smiled, nor dwelt on the subject at all; he simply pointed out to his superior the fact that they were now abreast of the *Thunderer*, and desired to know whether it was his pleasure to proceed any farther.

"To the *Carnatic*, Greenly, if Sir

Wycherly will have the goodness to shape his course thither. I have a word to say to my friend Parker, before we sleep to-night. Give us room, however, to look at Morganic's fancies, for I never pass his ship without learning something new. Lord Morganic's vessel is a good school for us old fellows to attend—hey, Greenly?"

"The *Achilles* is certainly a model vessel in some respects, Sir Gervaise, though I flatter myself the Plantagenets have no great occasion to imitate her, in order to gain a character."

"You imitate Morganic in order to know how to keep a ship in order! Poh! let Morganic come to school to you. Yet the fellow is not bashful in battle neither; keeps his station well, and makes himself both heard and felt. Ah! there he is, flourishing his hat on the poop, and wondering what the deuce Sir Jarvy's after, now! Sheer in, Wychecombe, and let us hear what he has to say."

"Good evening, Sir Gervaise," called out the earl, as usual taking the initiative in the discourse; "I was in hopes when I saw your flag in the boat, that you were going to do me a favor to open a bottle of claret, and to taste some fruit I have still standing on the table."

"I thank you, my lord, but business before pleasure. We have not been idle to-day, though to-morrow shall be still more busy. How does the *Achilles* steer, now her foremast is in its place?"

"Yaws like a fellow with his grog aboard, Sir Gervaise, on my honor! We shall never do anything with her, until you let us consent to stay her spars, in our own fashion. Do you intend to send me Daly back, or am I to play first lieutenant myself, Admiral?"

"Daly's shipped for the cruise, and you must do as well as you can without him. If you find yourself without a second astern, in the course of the night, do not fancy she has gone to the bottom. Keep good lookouts, and pay attention to the signals."

As Sir Gervaise waved his hand, the young noble did not venture to reply, much less to ask a question, though there was not a little speculation on the poop of the *Achilles*, concerning the meaning of his words. The boats moved on, and five minutes later Sir Gervaise was on the quarter-deck of the *Carnatic*.

Parker received the commander-in-chief, hat in hand, with a solicitude and anxiety that were constitutional, perhaps, and which no consciousness of deserving could entirely appease. Habit, however, had its share in it, since, accustomed to defer to rank from boyhood, and the architect of his own "little fortune," he had ever attached more importance to the commendation of his superior than was usual with those who had other props to lean on than their own services. As soon as the honors of the quarter-deck had been duly paid—for these Sir Gervaise never neglected himself, nor allowed others to neglect—the Vice-admiral intimated to Captain Parker a desire to see him in his cabin, requesting Greenly and Wycherly to accompany them below.

"Upon my word, Parker," commenced Sir Gervaise, looking round him at the air of singular domestic comfort that the after-cabin of the ship presented, "you have the knack of taking a house to sea with you that no other captain of the fleet possesses! No finery, no Morganics, but a plain, wholesome domestic look that might make a man believe he was in his father's house. I would give a thousand pounds if my vagabonds could give the *Plantagenet* such a Bowldero look, now!"

"Less than a hundred, sir, have done the little you see here. Mrs. Parker makes it a point to look to those matters herself, and in that lies the whole secret perhaps. A good wife is a great blessing, Sir Gervaise, though you have never been able to persuade yourself into the notion, I believe."

"I hardly think, Parker, the wife can do it all. Now there's Stowel, Bluewater's captain, he is married as well as yourself—nay, by George, I've heard the old fellow say he had as much wife as any man in his Majesty's service—but *his* cabin looks like a cobbler's barn, and his stateroom like a soldier's bunk! When we were lieutenants together in the *Eury-*

dice, Parker, your stateroom had just the same air of comfort about it that this cabin has at this instant. No, no—it's in the grain, or it would never show itself in all times and places."

"You forget, Sir Gervaise, that when I had the honor to be your messmate in the *Eurydice*, I was a married man."

"I beg your pardon, my old friend; so you were, indeed! Why, that was a confounded long time ago, hey, Parker?"

"It was, truly, sir; but I was poor, and could not afford the extravagance of a single life. I married for the sake of economy, Admiral Oakes."

"And love," answered Sir Gervaise, laughing. "I'll warrant you, Greenly, that he persuaded Mrs. Parker into that notion, whether true or not. I'll warrant you he didn't tell her he married for so sneaking a thing as economy? I should like to see your stateroom now, Parker."

"Nothing easier, Sir Gervaise," answered the captain, rising and opening the door. "Here it is, sir, though little worthy the attention of the owner of Bowldero."

"A notable place, truly! and with a housewife-look about it that must certainly remind you of Mrs. Parker—unless, indeed, that picture at the foot of your cot puts other notions into your head! What young hussy have you got there, my old Eurydice? Hey, Parker?"

"That is a picture of my faithful wife, Sir Gervaise; a proper companion, I hope, of my cruise."

"Hey! What, that young thing your wife, Parker! How the d——l came she to have you?"

"Ah, Sir Gervaise, she is a young thing no longer, but is well turned toward sixty. The picture was taken when she was a bride, and is all the dearer to me, now that I know the original has shared my fortunes so long. I never look at it, without remembering, with gratitude, how much she thinks of me in our cruises, and how often she prays for our success. You are not forgotten, either, sir, in her prayers."

"I!" exclaimed the Vice-admiral, quite touched at the earnest simplicity of the other. "D'ye hear that, Greenly? I'll engage now, this lady is a good woman—a really excellent creature—just such another as my poor sainted mother was, and a blessing to all around her! Give me your hand, Parker; and when you write next to your wife, tell her from me, God bless her; and say all you think a man ought to say on such an occasion. And now to business. Let us seat ourselves in this snug, domestic-looking cabin of yours, and talk our matters over."

The two captains and Wycherly followed the Vice-admiral into the after-cabin, where the latter seated himself on a small sofa, while the others took chairs, in respectful attitudes near him, no familiarity or jocularity on the part of a naval superior ever lessening the distance between him and those who hold subordinate commissions—a fact that legislators would do well to remember, when graduating rank in a service. As soon as all were placed, Sir Gervaise opened his mind.

"I have a delicate piece of duty, Captain Parker," he commenced, "which I wish intrusted to yourself. You must know that we handled the ship which escaped us this morning by running down into her own line, pretty roughly in every respect; besides cutting two of her masts out of her. This ship, as you may have seen, has got up jury-masts, already; but they are spars that can only be intended to carry her into port. Monsieur de Vervillin is not the man I take him to be, if he intends to leave the quarrel between us where it is. Still, he cannot keep that crippled ship in his fleet, any more than we can keep our prize, and I make no doubt he will send her off to Cherbourg as soon as it is dark; most probably accompanied by one of his corvettes; or perhaps by a frigate."

"Yes, Sir Gervaise," returned Parker, thoughtfully, as soon as his superior ceased to speak; "what you predict, is quite likely to happen."

"It must happen, Parker, the wind blowing directly for his haven. Now, you may easily imagine what I want of the *Carnatic*."

"I suppose I understand you, sir; and

yet, if I might presume to express a wish——"

"Speak out, old boy—you're talking to a friend. I have chosen you to serve you, both as one I like, and as the oldest captain in the fleet. Whoever catches that ship will hear more of it."

"Very true, sir; but are we not likely to have more work, here? and would it be altogether prudent to send so fine a ship as the *Carnatic* away, when the enemy will count ten to six, even if she remain?"

"All this has been thought of; and I suppose your own feeling has been anticipated. You think it will be more honorable to your vessel, to keep her place in the line, than to take a ship already half-beaten."

"That's it, indeed, Sir Gervaise. I do confess some such thoughts were crossing my mind."

"Then see how easy it is to rowse them out of it. I cannot fight the French, in this moderate weather, without a re-enforcement. When the rear joins, we shall be just ten to ten, without you, and with you, should be eleven to ten. Now, I confess, I don't wish the least odds, and shall send away somebody; especially when I feel certain a noble two-decked ship will be the reward. If a frigate accompany the crippled fellow, you'll have your hands full, and a very fair fight; and should you get either, it will be a handsome thing. What say you now, Parker?"

"I begin to think better of the plan, Sir Gervaise, and am grateful for the selection. I wish, however, I knew your own precise wishes—I've always found it safe to follow them, sir."

"Here they are, then. Get four or five sets of the sharpest eyes you have, and send them aloft to keep a steady look on your chap, while there is light enough to be certain of him. In a little while, they'll be able to recognize him in the dark; and by keeping your night-glasses well leveled, he can scarcely slip off, without our missing him. The moment he is gone, wear short and round, and make the best of your way for Cape la Hogue, or Alderney; you will go three feet to his two, and, my life on it, by daylight you'll have him to windward of you, and then you'll be certain of him. Wait for no signals from me, but be off, as soon as it is dark. When your work is done, make the best of your way to the nearest English port, and clap a Scotchman on your shoulder to keep the king's sword from chafing it. They thought me fit for knighthood at three-and-twenty and the deuce is in it, Parker, if you are not worthy of it at three-and-sixty!"

"Ah! Sir Gervaise, everything you undertook succeeded. You never yet failed in any expedition."

"That has come from attempting much. My plans have often failed; but as something good has generally followed from them, I have the credit of designing to do exactly what I've done."

Then followed a long, detailed discourse, on the subject before them, in which Greenly joined; the latter making several useful suggestions to the veteran commander of the *Carnatic*.

After passing quite an hour in the cabin of Parker, Sir Gervaise took his leave and re-entered his barge. It was now so dark that small objects could not be distinguished a hundred yards, and the piles of ships, as the boat glided past them, resembled black hillocks, with clouds floating among their tree-like and waving spars. No captain presumed to hail the commander-in-chief, as he rowed down the line again, with the exception of the peer of the realm. He indeed had always something to say; and, as he had been conjecturing what could induce the Vice-admiral to pay so long a visit to the *Carnatic*, he could not refrain from uttering so much aloud, when he heard the measured strokes of the oars from the returning barge.

"We shall be jealous of this compliment to Captain Parker, Sir Gervaise," he called out, "unless your favors are occasionally extended to some of us less worthy ones."

"Aye, aye, Morganic, you'll be remembered in proper time. In the meantime keep your people's eyes open, so as not to lose sight of the French. We shall have

something to say to them in the morning."

"Spare us a night-action, if possible, Sir Gervaise! I do detest fighting when I'm sleepy; and I like to see my enemy, too. As much as you please in the daytime; but a quiet night, I do beseech you, sir."

"I'll warrant you, now, if the opera or Ranelagh, or a drum, or a masquerade, were inviting you, Morganic, you'd think but little of your pillow!" answered Sir Gervaise, dryly; "whatever you do yourself, my lord, don't let the *Achilles* get asleep on duty; I may have need of her to-morrow. Give way, Wychecombe, give way, and let us get home again."

In fifteen minutes from that instant, Sir Gervaise was once more on the poop of the *Plantagenet*, and the barge in its place on deck. Greenly was attending to the duties of the ship, and Bunting stood in readiness to circulate such orders as it might suit the commander-in-chief to give.

It was now nine o'clock, and it was not easy to distinguish objects on the ocean, even as large as a ship, at the distance of half a league. By the aid of the glasses, however, a vigilant lookout was kept on the French vessels, which, by this time, were quite two leagues distant, drawing more ahead. It was necessary to fill away, in order to close with them, and a night-signal was made to that effect. The whole British line braced forward their main-yards, as it might be, by a common impulse, and had there been one there of sufficiently acute senses, he might have heard all six of the main-topsails flapping at the same instant. As a matter of course the vessels started ahead, and, the order being to follow the Vice-admiral in a close line ahead, when the *Plantagenet* edged off, so as to bring the wind abeam, each vessel did the same, in succession, or as soon as in the commander-in-chief's wake, as if guided by instinct. About ten minutes later, the *Carnatic*, to the surprise of those who witnessed the maneuver in the *Achilles*, wore short round, and set studding-sails on the starboard side, steering large. The darkest portion of the horizon being that which lay to the eastward, or in the direction of the Continent, in twenty minutes the pyramid of her shadowy outline was swallowed in the gloom. All this time, *La Victoire* with the *Druid* leading and towing, kept upon a bowline; and an hour later, when Sir Gervaise found himself abeam of the French line again, and half a league to windward of it, no traces were to be seen of the three last ships mentioned.

"So far, all goes well, gentlemen," observed the Vice-admiral to the group around him on the poop; "and we will now try to count the enemy, to make certain he, too, has no stragglers out to pick up waifs. Greenly, try that glass; it is set for the night, and your eyes are the best we have. Be particular looking for the fellow under jury masts."

"I make out but ten ships in the line, Sir Gervaise," answered the Captain, after a long examination; "of course the crippled ship must have gone to leeward. Of her, certainly I can find no traces."

"You will oblige me, Sir Wycherly, by seeing what you can make out, in the same way."

After a still longer examination than that of the captain, Wycherly made the same report, adding that he thought he also missed the frigate that had been nearest *Le Foudroyant*, repeating her signals throughout the day. This circumstance gratified Sir Gervaise, as he was pleased to find his prognostics come true, and he was not sorry to be rid of one of the enemy's light cruisers; a species of vessel that often proved embarrassing, after a decided affair, even to the conqueror.

"I think, Sir Gervaise," Wycherly modestly added, "that the French have boarded their tacks, and are pressing up to windward to near us. Did it not appear so to you, Captain Greenly?"

"Not at all. If they carry courses, the sails have been set within the last five minutes—ha! Sir Gervaise, that is an indication of a busy night!"

As he spoke, Greenly pointed to the place where the French admiral was known to be, where at that instant appeared a double row of lights; provi-

that the batteries had their lanterns lit, and showing a disposition to engage. In less than a minute the whole French line was to be traced along the sea, by the double rows of illumination, the light resembling that which is seen through the window of a room that has a bright fire, rather than one in which lamps or candles are actually visible. As this was just the species of engagement in which the English had much to risk, and little to gain, Sir Gervaise immediately gave orders to brace forward the yards, to board fore-and-main tacks, and to set topgallant-sails. As a matter of course, the ships astern made sail in the same manner, and hauled up on taut bowlines, following the Admiral.

"This is not our play," coolly remarked Sir Gervaise; "a crippled ship would drop directly into their arms, and as for any success at long shot, in a two-to-one fight, it is not to be looked for. No, no, Monsieur de Vervillin, show us your teeth if you will, and a pretty sight it is, but you do not draw a shot from me. I hope the order to show no lights is duly attended to."

"I do not think there is a light visible from any ship in the fleet, Sir Gervaise," answered Bunting, "though we are so near, there can be no great difficulty in telling where we are."

"All but the *Carnatic* and the prize, Bunting. The more fuss they make with us, the less will they think of them."

It is probable the French admiral had been deceived by the near approach of his enemy, for whose prowess he had a profound respect. He had made his preparations in expectation of an attack, but he did not open his fire, although heavy shot would certainly have told with effect. Indisposed to the uncertainty of a night action, he declined bringing it on, and the lights disappeared from his ports an hour later; at that time the English ships, by carrying sail harder than was usual in so stiff a breeze, found themselves out of gun-shot, on the weather bow of their enemies. Then, and not till then, did Sir Gervaise reduce his canvas, having, by means of his glasses, first ascertained that the French had again hauled up their courses, and were moving along at a very easy rate of sailing.

It was now near midnight, and Sir Gervaise prepared to go below. Previously to quitting the deck, however, he gave very explicit orders to Greenly, who transmitted them to the first lieutenant, that officer or the captain intending to be on the lookout through the night; the movements of the whole squadron being so dependent on those of the flag ship. The Vice-admiral then retired, and went coolly to bed. He was not a man to lose his rest, because an enemy was just out of gun-shot. Accustomed to be maneuvering in front of hostile fleets, the situation had lost its novelty, and he had so much confidence in the practice of his captains, that he well knew nothing could occur so long as his orders were obeyed; to doubt the latter would have been heresy in his eyes. In professional nonchalance, no man exceeded our Vice-admiral. Blow high, or blow low, it never disturbed the economy of his cabin-life, beyond what unavoidably was connected with the comfort of his ship; nor did any prospect of battle cause a meal to vary a minute in time or a particle in form, until the bulkheads were actually knocked down, and the batteries were cleared for action.

Although excitable in trifles, and sometimes a little irritable, Sir Gervaise, in the way of his profession, was a great man on great occasions. His temperament was sanguine, and his spirit both decided and bold; and, in common with all such men who see the truth at all, when he did see it, he saw it so clearly as to throw all the doubts that beset minds of a less masculine order, into the shade. On the present occasion he was sure nothing could well occur to disturb his rest; and he took it with the composure of one on *terra firma* and in the security of peace. Unlike those who are unaccustomed to scenes of excitement, he quietly undressed himself, and his head was no sooner on its pillow than he fell into a profound sleep.

It would have been a curious subject of observation to an experienced person, to note the manner in which the two fleets

maneuvered throughout the night. After several hours of ineffectual efforts to bring their enemies fairly within reach of their guns, after the moon had risen, the French gave the matter up for a time, shortening sail while most of their superior officers caught a little rest.

The sun was just rising as Galleygo laid his hand on the shoulder of the Vice-admiral, agreeably to the orders given the previous night. The touch sufficed; Sir Gervaise being wide awake in an instant. "Well," he said, rising to a sitting attitude, and putting the question which first occurs to a seaman, "how's the weather?"

"A good topgallant breeze, Sir Jarvy, and just what's this ship's play. If you'd only let her out, and on them Johnny Crapauds, she'd be down among 'em, in half an hour, like a hawk upon a chicken. I ought to report to your honor, that the last chicken will be dished for breakfast, unless we gives an order to the gunroom steward to turn us over some of his birds as pay for what the pigs eat; which were real capons."

"Why, you pirate, you would not have me commit a robbery on the high seas, would ye?"

"What robbery would it be to order the gunroom to sell us some poultry? Lord! Sir Jarvy, I'm as far from wishing to take a thing without an order, as the gunner's yeoman; but let Mr. Atwood put it in black and white."

"Tush!" interrupted the master. "How did the French bear from us, when you were last on deck?"

"Why, there they is, Sir Jarvy," answered Galleygo, drawing the curtain from before the stateroom window, and allowing the Vice-admiral to see the rear of the French line for himself, by turning half round; "and just where we wants 'em. Their leading ship a little abaft our lee-beam, distant one league. That's what I calls satisfactory, now."

"Aye, that is a good position, Master Galleygo. Was the prize in sight, or were you too chicken-headed to look?"

"I chicken-headed! Well, Sir Jarvy, of all characters and description of me that your honor has seen fit to put abroad, this is the most unjustest; chickens being a food I never thinks on, off soundings. Pig-headed you might in reason call me, Sir Jarvy; for I do look arter the pigs, which is the only real stand-by in a ship; but I never dreams of a chicken, except for happetite. When they was eight on 'em——"

"Was the prize in sight?" demanded Sir Gervaise, a little sharply.

"No, Sir Jarvy; she had disappeared, and the *Druid* with her. But this isn't all, sir; for they does say, some'at has befallen the *Carnatic*, she having gone out of her line, like a binnacle-lamp, at eight bells."

"Aye, she is not visible either?"

"Not so much as a hen-coop, Sir Jarvy! We all wonders what has become of Captain Parker; no sign of him or of his ship is to be found on the briny ocean. The young geutlemen of the watch laugh, and say she must have gone up in a waterspout, but they laughs so much at misfortins, generally, that I never minds 'em."

"Have you had a good lookout at the ocean, this morning, Master Galleygo?" asked Sir Gervaise, drawing his head out of a basin of water, for, by this time, he was half-dressed, and making preparations for the razor. "You used to have an eye for a chase, when we were in a frigate, and ought to be able to tell me if Blue-water is in sight."

"Admiral Blue! Well, Sir Jarvy, it *is* remarkable, but I had just rubbed his division out of my log, and forgotten all about it. There was a handful of craft, or so, off here to the nor'ard, at daylight, but I never thought it was Admiral Blue, it being more nat'ral to suppose him in his place, as usual, in the rear of our own line. Let me see, Sir Jarvy, how many ships has we absent under Admiral Blue?"

"Why, the five two-deckers of his own division, to be sure, besides the *Ranger* and the *Gnat*. Seven sail in all."

"Yes, that's just it! Well, your honor, there was five sail to be seen out here to the nor'ard, as I told you, and, sure enough, it may have been Admiral Blue, with all his craft."

By this time Sir Gervaise had his fa-

covered with lather, but he forgot the circumstance in a moment. As the wind was at the northwest, and the *Plantagenet* was on the larboard tack, looking in the direction of the Bill of Portland, though much too far to the southward to allow the land to be seen, his own larboard quarter-galley window commanded a good view of the whole horizon to windward. Crossing over from the starboard stateroom, which he occupied *ex officio*, he opened the window in question, and took a look for himself. There, sure enough, was visible a squadron of five ships, in close order, edging leisurely down on the two lines, under their topsails, and just near enough to allow it to be ascertained that their courses were not set. This sight produced a sudden change in the Vice-admiral's movements. The business of the toilette was resumed in haste, and the beard was mowed with a slashing hand, that might have been hazardous in the motion of the ship, but for the long experience of a sailor. This important part of the operation was scarcely through, when Locker announced the presence of Captain Greenly in the main cabin.

"What now, Greenly? What now?" called out the Vice-admiral, puffing as he withdrew his head again from the basin; "what now, Greenly? Any news from Bluewater?"

"I am happy to tell you, Sir Gervaise, he has been in sight more than an hour, and is closing with us, though shyly and slowly. I would not let you be called, as all was right, and I knew sleep was necessary to a clear head."

"You have done quite right, Greenly; God willing, I intend this to be a busy day! The French must see our rear division?"

"Beyond a doubt, sir, but they show no signs of making off. M. de Vervillin will fight, I feel certain; though the experience of yesterday may render him a little shy as to the mode."

"And his crippled ship—old Parker's friend—I take it she is not visible."

"You are quite right in your conjecture, Sir Gervaise; the crippled ship is off, as is one of the frigates, no doubt to see her in. Blewet, too, has gone well to windward of the French, though he can fetch into no anchorage short of Portsmouth, if this breeze stand."

"Any haven will do. Our little success will animate the king's party, and give it more *éclat*, perhaps, than it really merits. Let there be no delay with the breakfast this morning, Greenly, it will be a busy day."

"Aye, aye, sir," answered the captain, in the sailor's usualmanner; "that has been seen to already, as I have expected as much. Admiral Bluewater keeps his ships in most beautiful order, sir. I do not think the *Cæsar*, which leads, is two cables' length from the *Dublin*, the sternmost vessel. He is driving four-in-hand, with a tight rein, too, depend on it, sir."

At this instant, Sir Gervaise came out of his stateroom, his coat in his hand, and with a countenance that was thoughtful. He finished dressing with an abstracted air, and would not have known the last garment was on, had not Galleygo given a violent pull on its skirts, in order to smooth the cloth about the shoulders.

"It is odd that Bluewater should come down nearly before the wind, in a line ahead, and not in a line abreast!" Sir Gervaise rejoined, as his steward did this office for him.

"Let Admiral Blue alone, for doing what's right," put in Galleygo, in his usual confident and self-possessed manner. "By keeping his ships astern of hisself, he can tell where to find 'em, and we understand from experience, if Admiral Blue knows where to find a ship, he knows how to use her."

Instead of rebuking this interference, which went a little further than common. Greenly was surprised to see the Vice-admiral look his steward intently in the face, as if the man had expressed some shrewd and comprehensive truth. Then turning to his captain, Sir Gervaise intimated an intention of going on deck to survey the state of things with his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Thou shouldst have died, O high-souled chief!
In those bright days of glory fled,
When triumph so prevailed o'er grief,
We scarce would mourn the dead."
—MRS. HEMANS.

THE eventful day opened with most of the glories of a summer's morning. The wind alone prevented it from being one of the finest sun-risings in July. That continued fresh, at northwest, and, consequently, cool, for the season. The seas of the southwest gale had entirely subsided, and were succeeded by the regular but comparatively trifling swell of the new breeze. For large ships, it might be called smooth water; though the *Driver* and *Active* showed, by their pitching and unsteadiness, and even the two-deckers, by their waving masts, that the unquiet ocean was yet in motion. The wind seemed likely to stand, and was what seamen would be apt to call a good six-knot breeze.

To leeward, still distant about a league, lay the French vessels, drawn up in beautiful array, and in an order so close, and a line so regular, as to induce the belief that M. de Vervillin had made his dispositions to receive the expected attack in his present position. All his main-topsails lay flat aback; the topgallant sails were flying loose, but with buntlines and clew-lines hauled up; the jibs were fluttering to leeward of their booms, and the courses were hanging in festoons about their yards. This was gallant fighting canvas, and it excited the admiration of even his enemies. To increase this feeling, just as Sir Gervaise's foot reached the poop, the whole French line displayed their ensigns, and *Le Foudroyant* fired a gun to windward.

"Hey, Greenly?" exclaimed the English commander-in-chief; "this is a manly defiance, and coming from M. de Vervillin, it means something! He wishes to take the day for it; though, as I think half that time will answer, we will wash up the cups before we go at it. Make the signals, Bunting, for the ships to heave to, and then get to their breakfasts, as fast as possible. Steady breeze—steady breeze, Greenly, and all we want!"

Five minutes later, while Sir Gervaise was running his eye over the signal-book, the *Plantagenet's* calls were piping the people to their morning meal, at least an hour earlier than common; the people repaired to their messes with a sort of stern joy; every man in the ship understanding the reason of a summons so unusual. The calls of the vessels astern were heard soon after, and one of the officers, who was watching the enemy with a glass, reported that he thought the French were breakfasting also. Orders being given to the officers to employ the next half hour in the same manner, nearly everybody was soon engaged in eating; few thinking that the meal might probably be their last. Sir Gervaise felt a concern, which he succeeded in concealing, however, at the circumstance that the ships to windward made no more sail; though he refrained from signaling the Rear-admiral to that effect, from tenderness to his friend, and a vague apprehension of what might be the consequences. While the crews were eating, he stood gazing, thoughtfully, at the noble spectacle the enemy offered, to leeward, occasionally turning wistful glances at the division that was constantly drawing nearer to windward. At length Greenly, himself, reported that the Plantagenets had "turned the hands to" again. At this intelligence, Sir Gervaise started, as from a reverie, smiled, and spoke. We will here remark that now, as on the previous day, all the natural excitability of manner had disappeared from the commander-in-chief, and he was quiet, and exceedingly gentle in his deportment. This, all who knew him understood to denote a serious determination to engage.

"I have desired Galleygo to set my little table, half an hour hence, in the after-cabin, Greenly, and you will share the meal with me. Sir Wycherly will be of our party, and I hope it will not be the last time we may meet at the same board. It is necessary everything should be in fighting-order to-day!"

"So I understand it, Sir Gervaise. We

are ready to begin, as soon as the order shall be received."

"Wait one moment, until Bunting comes up from his breakfast. Ah! here he is, and we are quite ready for him, having bent on the signal in his absence. Show the order, Bunting; for the day advances."

The little flags were fluttering at the main-top-gallant-masthead of the *Plantagenet* in less than one minute, and in another it was repeated by the *Chloe, Driver,* and *Active,* all of which were lying-to, a quarter of a mile to windward, charged in particular with this, among other duties. So well was this signal known, that not a book in the fleet was consulted, but all the ships answered, the instant the flags could be seen and understood. Then the shrill whistles were heard along the line, calling, "All hands" to "clear ship for action, ahoy!"

No sooner was this order given in the *Plantagenet,* than the ship became a scene of active but orderly exertion. The topmen were on the yards, stoppering, swinging the yards in chains, and lashing, in order to prevent shot from doing more injury than was unavoidable; bulwarks were knocked down; mess-chests, bags, and all other domestic appliances, disappeared below,* and the decks were cleared of everything which could be removed, and which would not be necessary in an engagement. Fully a quarter of an hour was thus occupied, for there was no haste, and as it was no moment of mere parade, it was necessary that the work should be effectually done. The officers forbade haste, and nothing important was reported as effected, that some one in authority did not examine it with his own eyes, to see that no proper care had been neglected.

Then Mr. Bury, the first lieutenant, went on the main-yard in person, to look at the manner in which it had been slung, while he sent the boatswain up forward on the same errand. These were unusual precautions, but the word had passed through the ship "that Sir Jarvy was in earnest;" and whenever it was known that "Sir Jarvy" was in such a humor, every one understood that the day's work was to be hard, if not long.

"Our breakfast is ready, Sir Jarvy," reported Galleygo, "and as the decks are all clear, the b'ys can make a clean run of it for the coppers. I only wants to know when to serve it, your honor."

"Serve it now, my good fellow. Tell the Bowlderos to be nimble, and expect us below. Come, Greenly—come, Wychecombe—we are the last to eat; let us not be the last at our stations."

"Ship's clear, sir," reported Bury to his captain as the three reached the quarter-deck on their way to the cabin.

"Very well, Bury; when the fleet is signaled to go to quarters, we will obey with the rest."

As this was said, Greenly looked at the Vice-admiral to catch his wishes. But Sir Gervaise had no intention of fatiguing his people unnecessarily. He had left his private orders with Bunting, as he passed down without an answer or a glance. The arrangements in the after-cabin were as snug and as comfortable as if the breakfast-table had been set in a private house, and the trio took their seats and commenced operations with a hearty good will. The Vice-admiral ordered the doors thrown open, and as the ports-lids were up, from the place where he sat he could command glimpses, both to leeward and to windward, that included a view of the enemy, as well as one of his own expected re-enforcements. The Bowlderos were in full livery, and more active and attentive than usual even. Their station in battle—for no man on board the vessel of war is an "idler" in the combat—was on the poop, as musketeers, near the person of the master, whose colors they wore, under the ensign of the prince, like vassals of an ancient baron. Notwithstanding the crisis of the morning, however, these men performed their customary functions with the precision and method of English

* In the action of the Nile, many of the French ships, under the impression that the enemy must engage on the outside, put their lumber, bags, etc., into the ports and between the guns, in the larboard, or inshore batteries; and when the British anchored inshore of them, these batteries could not be used.

menials, omitting no luxury or usage of the table. On a sofa behind the table was spread a full dress-coat of a Vice-admiral, then a neat but plain uniform, without either lace or epaulets, but decorated with a rich star in brilliants, the emblem of the Order of the Bath. This coat Sir Gervaise always wore in battle, unless the weather rendered a "storm-uniform," as he used to term a plainer attire, necessary.

The breakfast passed off pleasantly, the gentlemen eating as if no momentous events were near. Just at its close, however, Sir Gervaise leaned forward, and looking through one of the weather-ports of the main cabin, an expression of pleasure illuminated his countenance as he said:

"Ah! there goes Bluewater's signals, at last!—a certain proof that he is about to put himself in communication with us."

"I have been a good deal surprised, sir," observed Greenly, a little dryly, though with great respect of manner, "that you have not ordered the Rear-admiral to make more sail. He is jogging along like a heavy wagon, and yet I hardly think he can mistake these five ships for Frenchmen!"

"He is never in a hurry, and no doubt wishes to let his crews breakfast before he closes. I'll warrant ye now, gentlemen, that his ships are at this moment all as clear as a church five minutes after the blessing has been pronounced."

"It will not be one of our Virginian churches, then, Sir Gervaise," observed Wycherly, smiling; "they serve for an exchange, to give and receive news in, after the service is over."

"Aye, that's the old rule—pray first, and then gossip. Well, Bunting, what does the Rear-admiral say?"

"Upon my word, Sir Gervaise, I can make nothing of the signal, though it is easy enough to make out the flags," answered the puzzled signal-officer. "Will you have the goodness to look at the book yourself, sir? The number is one hundred and forty."

"One hundred and forty! Why, that must have something to do with anchoring!—aye, here it is. 'Anchor I cannot, having lost my cables.' Who the devil asked him to anchor?"

"That's just it, sir. The signal-officer on board the *Cæsar* must have made some mistake in his flags; for, though the distance is considerable, our glasses are good enough to read them."

"Perhaps Admiral Bluewater has set the private, personal telegraph at work, sir," quietly observed Greenly.

The commander-in-chief actually changed color at this suggestion. His face, at first, flushed to crimson; then it became pale, like the countenance of one who suffered under acute bodily pain. Wycherly observed this, and respectfully inquired if Sir Gervaise were ill.

"I thank you, young sir," answered the Vice-admiral, smiling painfully; "it is over. I believe I shall have to go into dock, and let Magrath look at some of my old hurts, which are sometimes troublesome. Mr. Bunting, do me the favor to go on deck, and ascertain, by a careful examination, if a short red pennant be not set some ten or twelve feet above the uppermost flag. Now, Greenly, we will take the other cup of tea, for there is plenty of leisure."

Two or three brooding minutes followed. Then Bunting returned to say the pennant was there, a fact he had quite overlooked in his former observations, confounding the narrow flag in question with the regular pennant of the king. This short red pennant denoted that the communication was verbal, according to a method invented by Bluewater himself, and by means of which, using the ordinary numbers, he was enabled to communicate with his friend, without any of the captains, or, indeed, without Sir Gervaise's own signal-officer knowing what was said. In a word, without having recourse to any new flags, but, by simply giving new numbers to the old ones, and referring to a prepared dictionary, it was possible to hold a conversation in sentences, that should be a secret to all but themselves. Sir Gervaise took down the number of the signal that was flying, and directed Bunting to show the answering flag, with a similar pennant.

over it, and to continue this operation so long as the Rear-admiral might make his signals. The numbers were to be sent below as fast as received. As soon as Bunting disappeared, the Vice-admiral unlocked a secretary, the key of which was never out of his own possession, took from it a small dictionary, and laid it by his plate. All this time the breakfast proceeded, signals of this nature frequently occurring between the two Admirals. In the course of the next ten minutes, a quartermaster brought below a succession of numbers written on small pieces of paper; after which Bunting appeared himself to say that the *Cæsar* had stopped signaling.

Sir Gervaise now looked out each word by its proper number, and wrote it down with his pencil as he proceeded, until the whole read—"God sake—make no signal. Engage not." No sooner was the communication understood than the paper was torn into minute fragments, the book replaced, and the Vice-admiral, turning with a calm, determined countenance to Greenly, ordered him to beat to quarters as soon as Bunting could show a signal to the fleet to the same effect. On this hint, all but the Vice-admiral went on deck, and the Bowlderos instantly set about removing the table and all the other appliances. Finding himself annoyed by the movements of the servants, Sir Gervaise walked out into the great cabin, which, regardless of its present condition, he began to pace as was his wont when lost in thought. The bulkheads being down, and the furniture removed, this was in truth walking in sight of the crew. All who happened to be on the main-deck could see what passed, though no one presumed to enter a spot that was tabooed to vulgar feet, even when thus exposed. The aspect and manner of "Sir Jarvy," however, were not overlooked, and the men prognosticated a serious time.

Such was the state of things, when the drums beat to quarters, throughout the whole line. At the first tap, the great cabin sunk to the level of an ordinary battery; the seamen of two guns, with the proper officers, entering within the sacred limits, and coolly setting about clearing their pieces, and making the other preparations necessary for action.

All this time Sir Gervaise continued pacing what would have been the center of his own cabin had the bulkheads stood, the grim-looking sailors avoiding him with great dexterity, and invariably touching their hats as they were compelled to glide near his person, though everything went on as if he were not present. Sir Gervaise might have remained lost in thought much longer than he did, had not the report of a gun recalled him to a consciousness of the scene that was enacting around him.

"What's that?" suddenly demanded the Vice-admiral; "is Bluewater signaling again?"

"No, Sir Gervaise," answered the fourth lieutenant, looking out of a lee port; "it is the French admiral giving us another weather-gun; as much as to ask why we don't go down. This is the second compliment of the same sort that he has paid us already to-day!"

These words were not at all spoken before the Vice-admiral was on the quarter-deck; in half a minute more he was on the poop. Here he found Greenly, Wychecombe, and Bunting, all looking with interest at the beautiful line of the enemy.

"Monsieur de Vervillin is impatient to wipe off the disgrace of yesterday," observed the first, "as is apparent by the invitations he gives us to come down. I presume Admiral Bluewater will wake up at this last hint."

"By Heaven, he has hauled his wind, and is standing to the northward and eastward!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise, surprise overcoming all his discretion. "Although an extraordinary movement, at such a time, it is wonderful in what beautiful order Bluewater keeps his ships!"

All that was said was true enough. The Rear-admiral's division having suddenly hauled up, in a close line ahead, each ship followed her leader as mechanically as if they moved by a common impulse. As no one in the least doubted the Rear-admiral's loyalty, and his courage was of proof, it was the general

opinion that this unusual maneuver had some connection with the unintelligible signals, and the young officers laughingly inquired among themselves what "Sir Jarvey was likely to do next?"

It would seem, however, that Monsieur de Vervillin suspected a repetition of some of the scenes of the preceding day; for, no sooner did he perceive that the English rear was hugging the wind, than five of his leading ships filled, and drew ahead, as if to meet that division, maneuvering to double on the head of his line; while the remaining five, with the *Foudroyant*, still lay with their topsails to the mast, waiting for their enemy to come down. Sir Gervaise could not stand this long. He determined, if possible, to bring Bluewater to terms, and he ordered the *Plantagenet* to fill. Followed by his own division, he wore immediately, and went off under easy sail, quartering, toward Monsieur de Vervillin's rear, to avoid being raked.

The quarter of an hour that succeeded was one of intense interest and of material changes, though not a shot was fired. As soon as the Comte de Vervillin perceived that the English were disposed to come nearer, he signaled his own division to bear up, and to run off dead before the wind, under their topsails, commencing astern; which reversed his order of sailing, and brought *Le Foudroyant* in the rear, or nearest to the enemy. This was no sooner done, than he settled all his topsails on the caps. There could be no mistaking this maneuver. It was a direct invitation to Sir Gervaise to come down, fairly alongside; the bearing up at once removing all risk of being raked in so doing. The English commander-in-chief was not a man to neglect such a palpable challenge; but, making a few signals to direct the mode of attack he contemplated, he set foresail and main-topgallant sail, and brought the wind directly over his own taffrail. The vessels astern followed like clock-work, and no one now doubted that the mode of attack was settled for that day.

As the French, with Monsieur de Vervillin, were still half a mile to the southward and eastward of the approaching division of their enemy, the Comte collected all his frigates and corvettes on his starboard hand, leaving a clear approach to Sir Gervaise on his larboard beam. This hint was understood, too, and the *Plantagenet* steered a course that would bring her up on that side of *Le Foudroyant*, and at the distance of about one hundred yards from the muzzles of her guns.

This threatened to be close work, and unusual work in fleets, at that day; but it was the game our commander-in-chief was fond of playing, and it was one, also, that promised soonest to bring matters to a result.

These preliminaries arranged, there was yet leisure for the respective commanders to look about them. The French were still fully a mile ahead of their enemies, and as both fleets were going in the same direction, the approach of the English was so slow as to leave some twenty minutes of that solemn breathing-time which reigns in a disciplined ship previous to the commencement of the combat. The feelings of the two commanders-in-chief at this pregnant instant were singularly in contradiction to each other. The Comte de Vervillin saw that the rear division of his force, under the Comte-Amiral le Vicomte des Prez, was in the very position he desired it to be, having obtained the advantage of the wind by the English division coming down, and by keeping its own luff. Between the two French officers there was a perfect understanding as to the course each was to take, and both now felt sanguine hopes of being able to obliterate the disgrace of the previous day, and that, too, by means very similar to those by which it had been incurred. On the other hand, Sir Gervaise was beset with doubts as to the course Bluewater might pursue. He could not, however, come to the conclusion that he would abandon him to the joint efforts of the two hostile divisions; and so long as the French rear-admiral was occupied by the English force to windward, it left to himself a clear field and no favor in the action with Monsieur de Vervillin.

He knew Bluewater's generous nature

too well not to feel certain his own compliance with the request not to signal his inferior would touch his heart, and give him a double chance with all his better feelings. Nevertheless, Sir Gervaise Oakes did not lead into this action without many and painful misgivings. He had lived too long in the world not to know that political prejudice was the most demoralizing of all our weaknesses, veiling our private vices under the plausible concealment of the public weal, and rendering even the well-disposed insensible to the wrongs they commit to individuals, by means of the deceptive flattery of serving the community. As doubt was more painful than the certainty of his worst forebodings, however, and it was not in his nature to refuse a combat so fairly offered, he was resolved to close with the Comte at every hazard, trusting the issue to God, and his own efforts.

The *Plantagenet* presented an eloquent picture of order and preparation, as she drew near the French line, on this memorable occasion. Her people were all at quarters, and, as Greenly walked through her batteries, he found every gun on the starboard side loose, leveled, and ready to be fired; while the opposite merely required a turn or two of the tackles to be cast loose, the priming to be applied, and the loggerhead to follow, in order to be discharged, also. A death-like stillness reigned from the poop to the cockpit, the older seamen occasionally glancing through their ports in order to ascertain the relative positions of the two fleets, that they might be ready for the collision. As the English got within musket-shot, the French ran their topsails to the mastheads, and their ships gathered fresher way through the water. Still the former moved with the greatest velocity, carrying the most sail, and impelled by the greater momentum. When near enough, however, Sir Gervaise gave the order to reduce the canvas of his own ship. The order was obeyed with machine-like promptitude, and in a few moments the Admiral turned again to the captain.

"That will do, Greenly," he said, in a mild, quiet tone. "Let run the topgallant-halyards, and haul up the foresail. The way you have, will bring you fairly alongside."

The captain gave the necessary orders, and the master shortened sail accordingly. Still the *Plantagenet* shot ahead, and, in three or four minutes more, her bows doubled so far on *Le Foudroyant's* quarter, as to permit a gun to bear. This was the signal for both sides, each ship opening at it might be in the same breath. The flash, the roar, and the eddying smoke followed in quick succession, and in a period of time that seemed nearly instantaneous. The crash of shot, and the shrieks of wounded mingled with the infernal din, for nature extorts painful concessions of human weakness, at such moments, and from the bravest and firmest.

Bunting was in the act of reporting to Sir Gervaise that no signal could be seen from the *Cæsar*, in the midst of this uproar, when a small round-shot discharged from the Frenchman's poop, passed through his body, literally driving the heart before it, leaving him dead at his commander's feet.

"I shall depend on you, Sir Wycherly, for the discharge of poor Bunting's duty, the remainder of the cruise," observed Sir Gervaise, with a smile in which courtesy and regret struggled singularly for the mastery. "Quartermasters, lay Mr. Bunting's body a little out of the way, and cover it with those signals. They are a suitable pall for so brave a man!"

Just as this occurred, the *Warspite* came clear of the *Plantagenet*, on her outside, according to orders, and she opened with her forward guns, taking the second ship in the French line for her target. In two minutes more these vessels also were furiously engaged in the hot strife. In this manner, ship after ship passed on the outside of the *Plantagenet*, and sheered into her berth ahead of her who had just been her own leader, until the *Achilles*, Lord Morganic, the last of the five, lay fairly side by side with *Le Conquereur*, the vessel now at the head of the French line. That the reader may understand the incidents more readily, we will give the opposing line in the precise form in which they lay, namely:

Plantagenet,	**Le Foudroyant,**
Warspite,	**Le Temeraire,**
Blenheim,	**Le Dugay Trouin,**
Thunderer,	**LAjax,**
Achilles,	**Le Conquereur.**

The constantly recurring discharges of four hundred pieces of heavy ordnance, within a space so small, had the effect to repel the regular currents of air, and, almost immediately, to lessen a breeze of six or seven knots, to one that would not propel a ship more than two or three. This was the first observable phenomenon connected with the action, but, as it had been expected, Sir Gervaise had used the precaution to lay his ships as near as possible in the positions in which he intended them to fight the battle. The next great physical consequence, one equally expected and natural, but which wrought a great change in the aspect of the battle, was the cloud of smoke in which the ten ships were suddenly enveloped.

At the first broadside between the two admirals, volumes of light, fleecy vapor rolled over the sea, meeting midway, and, rising thence in curling wreaths, left nothing but the masts and sails of the adversary visible in the hostile ship. This, of itself, would have soon hidden the combatants in the bosom of a nearly impenetrable cloud; but as the vessels drove onward they entered deeper beneath the sulphurous canopy, until it spread on each side of them, shutting out the view of ocean, skies and horizon. The burning of the priming below contributed to increase the smoke, until, not only was respiration difficult, but those who fought only a few yards apart frequently could not recognize each other's faces. In the midst of this scene of obscurity, and a din that might well have alarmed the caverns of the ocean, the earnest and well-drilled seamen toiled at their ponderous guns, and remedied with ready hands the injuries received in the rigging, each man as intent on his own particular duty as if he wrought in the occupations of an ordinary gale.

"Sir Wycherly," observed the Vice-admiral, when the cannonading had continued some twenty minutes, "there is little for a flag-officer to do in such a cloud of smoke. I would give much to know the exact position of the divisions of our two rear-admirals."

"There is but one mode of ascertaining that, Sir Gervaise—if it be your pleasure, I will attempt it. By going on the main-topgallant-yard, one might get a clear view, perhaps."

Sir Gervaise smiled his approbation, and presently saw the young man ascending the main-rigging, though half concealed in smoke. Just at this instant Greenly ascended to the poop, from making a tour of observation from below. Without waiting for a question, the captain made his report.

"We are doing pretty well, now, Sir Gervaise, though the first broadside of the Comte treated us roughly. I think his fire slackens, and Bury says he is certain that his fore-topmast is already gone. At all events, our lads are in good spirits, and yet all the sticks keep their places."

"I'm glad of this, Greenly; particularly of the ladder, just at this moment. I see you are looking at those signals—they cover the body of poor Bunting."

"And this train of blood to the ladder, sir—I hope our young baronet is not hurt?"

"No, it is one of the Bowlderos, who has lost a leg. I shall have to see that he wants for nothing hereafter."

There was a pause; then both the gentlemen smiled, as they heard the crashing work made by a shot just beneath them, which, by the sounds and the direction, they knew had passed through Greenly's crockery. Still neither spoke. After a few more minutes of silent observation, Sir Gervaise remarked that he thought the flashes of the French guns more distant than they had been at first, though, at that instant, not a trace of their enemy was to be discovered, except in the roar of the guns, and in these very flashes, and their effect on the *Plantagenet.*

"If so, sir, the Comte begins to find his berth too hot for him; here is the wind still directly over our taffrail, such as it is."

"No, no, we steer as we began; I keep

my eye on that compass below, and am certain we hold a straight course. Go forward, Greenly, and see that a sharp lookout is kept ahead. It is time some of our own ships should be crippled; we must be careful not to run into them. Should such a thing happen, sheer hard to starboard, and pass inside."

"Aye, aye, Sir Gervaise; your wishes shall be attended to."

As this was said, Greenly disappeared, and, at the next instant, Wycherly stood in his place.

"Well, sir, I am glad to see you back safe. If Greenly were here now, he would inquire about his masts, but I wish to know the position of the ships."

"I am the bearer of bad news, sir. Nothing at all could be seen from the top; but in the cross-trees, I got a good look through the smoke, and am sorry to say the French rear-admiral is coming down fast on our larboard-quarter, with all his force. We shall have him abeam in five minutes."

"And Bluewater?" demanded Sir Gervaise, quick as lightning.

"I could see nothing of Admiral Bluewater's ships; but knowing the importance of this intelligence, I came down immediately, and by the back-stay."

"You have done well, sir. Send a midshipman forward for Captain Greenly; then pass below yourself, and let the lieutenants in the batteries hear the news. They must divide their people, and by all means give a prompt and well-directed first broadside."

Wycherly waited for no more. He ran below with the activity of his years. The message found Greenly between the knight-heads, but he hurried aft to the poop to ascertain its object. It took Sir Gervaise but a moment to explain it all to the captain.

"In the name of Heaven, what can the other division be about," exclaimed Greenly, "that it lets the French rear-admiral come upon us, in a moment like this!"

"Of that, sir, it is unnecessary to speak now," answered the commander-in-chief, solemnly. "Our present business is to get ready for this new enemy. Go into the batteries again, and, as you prize victory, be careful not to throw away the first discharge, in the smoke."

As time pressed, Greenly swallowed his discontent, and departed. The five minutes that succeeded were bitter minutes to Sir Gervaise Oakes. Besides himself there were but five men on the poop, namely, the quartermaster who tended the signals, and three of the Bowlderos. All of these were using muskets as usual, though the Vice-admiral never permitted marines to be stationed at a point which he wished to be as clear of smoke, and as much removed from bustle, as possible. He began to pace this comparatively vacant little deck with a quick step, casting wistful glances toward the larboard-quarter; but though the smoke occasionally cleared a little in that direction, the firing having much slackened from exhaustion in the men, as well as from injuries given and received, he was unable to detect any signs of a ship.

Such was the state of things when Wycherly returned and reported that his orders were delivered, and part of the people were already in the larboard batteries.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reeved guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When at a word, the tops are manned on high:
Hark to the boatswain's call, the cheering cry!
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides,
Or school-boy midshipman, that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe, as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skillful urchin guides."
—BYRON.

"ARE you quite sure, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, that there is not some mistake about the approach of the rear division of the French?" inquired the Vice-admiral, endeavoring to catch some glimpse of the water, through the smoke on the larboard hand. "May not some crippled ship of our own have sheered from the line, and been left by us, unknowingly, on that side?"

"No, Sir Gervaise, there is no mistake; there can be none, unless I may

have been deceived a little in the distance. I saw nothing but the sails and spars, not of a single vessel, but three ships; and one of them wore the flag of a French rear-admiral at the mizzen. As a proof that I was not mistaken, sir, there it is this minute!"

The smoke on the off side of the *Plantagenet*, as a matter of course, was much less dense than that on the side engaged, and the wind beginning to blow in eddies, as ever happens in a heavy cannonade, there were moments in which he cast aside the "shroud of battle." At that instant an opening occurred through which a single mast and a single sail were visible, in the precise spot where Wycherly had stated the enemy might be looked for. It was a mizzen-topsail, beyond a question, and above it was fluttering the little square flag of the rear-admiral.

Sir Gervaise decided on the character of the vessel, and on his own course, in an instant. Stepping to the edge of the poop, with his natural voice, without the aid of a trumpet of any sort, he called out in tones that rose above the roar of the contest, the ominous but familiar nautical words of "Stand by!" Perhaps a call from powerful lungs (and the Vice-admiral's voice, when he chose to use it, was like the blast of a clarion) is clearer and more impressive, when unaided by instruments, than when it comes disguised and unnatural through a tube. At any rate, these words were heard even on the lower deck, by those who stood near the hatches. Taking them up, they were repeated by a dozen voices, with such expressions as "Look out, lads; Sir Jarvy's awake!" "Sight your guns!" "Wait till she's square!" and other similar admonitions that it is usual for the sea-officer to give, as he is about to commence the strife.

At this critical moment, Sir Gervaise again looked up, and caught another glimpse of the little flag as it passed into a vast wreath of smoke; he saw that the ship was fairly abeam, and, as if doubling all his powers, he shouted the word "Fire!" Greenly was standing on the lower-deck ladder, with his head just even with the coamings of the hatch, as this order reached him, and he repeated it in a voice scarcely less startling. The cloud on the larboard side was driven in all directions, like dust scattered by wind. The ship seemed on fire, and the missiles of forty-one guns flew on their deadly errand, as it might be at a single flash. The old *Plantagenet* trembled to her keel, and even bowed a little at the recoils, but, like one suddenly relieved from a burden, righted and went on her way none the less active. That timely broadside saved the English commander-in-chief's ship from an early defeat. It took the crew of *Le Pluton*, her new adversary, by surprise; for they had not been able to distinguish the precise position of their enemy; and, besides doing vast injury to both hull and people, drew her fire at an unpropitious moment. So uncertain and hasty, indeed, was the discharge the French ship gave in return, that no small portion of the contents of her guns passed ahead of the *Plantagenet*, and went into the larboard quarter of *Le Temeraire*, the French admiral's second ahead.

"That was a timely salute," said Sir Gervaise, smiling as soon as the fire of his new enemy had been received without material injury. "The first blow is always half the battle. We may now work on with some hopes of success. Ah! here comes Greenly again, God be praised! unhurt!"

The meeting of these two experienced seamen was cordial, but not without great seriousness. Both felt that the situation of not only the ship, but of the whole fleet, was extremely critical, the odds being much too great, and the position of the enemy too favorable, not to render the result, to say the least, exceedingly doubtful. Some advantage had certainly been obtained, thus far; but there was little hope of preserving it long. The circumstances called for very decided and particularly bold measures.

"My mind is made up, Greenly," observed the Vice-admiral. "We must go aboard of one of these ships, make it a hand-to-hand affair. We will take the French commander-in-chief; he is evi-

dently a good deal cut up, by the manner in which his fire slackens, and if we can carry him, or even force him out of the line, it will give us a better chance with the rest. As for Bluewater, God only knows what has become of him! He is not here at any rate, and we must help ourselves."

"You have only to order, Sir Gervaise, to be obeyed. I will lead the boarders myself."

"It must be a general thing, Greenly; I rather think we shall all of us go aboard of *Le Foudroyant*. Go give the necessary orders, and when everything is ready, round in a little on the larboard braces, clap your helm a-port, and give the ship a rank sheer to starboard. This will bring matters to a crisis, at once. By letting the foresail fall, and setting the spanker, you might shove the ship ahead a little faster."

Greenly instantly left the poop on this new and important duty. He sent his orders into the batteries, bidding the people remain at their guns, however, to the last moment; and particularly instructing the captain of marines as to the manner in which he was to cover, and then follow the boarding party. This done, he gave orders to brace forward the yards as directed by Sir Gervaise.

The reader will not overlook the material circumstance that all we have related occurred amid the din of battle. Guns were exploding at each instant, the cloud of smoke was both thickening and extending, fire was flashing in the semi-obscurity of its volumes, shot were rending the wood and cutting the rigging, and the piercing shrieks of agony, only so much the more appalling by being extorted from the stern and resolute, blended their thrilling accompaniments. Men seemed to be converted into demons, and yet there was a lofty and stubborn resolution to conquer mingled with all, that ennobled the strife and rendered it heroic. The broadsides that were delivered in succession down the line, as ship after ship of the rear division reached her station, however, proclaimed that Monsieur des Prez had imitated Sir Gervaise's mode of closing, the only one by means of which the leading vessel could escape destruction, and that the English were completely doubled on. At this moment, the sail trimmers of the *Plantagenet* handled their braces. The first pull was the last. No sooner were the ropes started than the fore-topmast went over the bows, dragging after it the main, with all its hamper, the mizzen snapping like a pipe-stem at the cap. By this cruel accident, the result of many injuries to shrouds, back-stays, and spare, the situation of the *Plantagenet* became worse than ever; for not only was the wreck to be partially cleared, at least, to fight many of the larboard guns, but the command of the ship was, in a great measure, lost, in the center of one of the most infernal *mêlées* that ever accompanied a combat at sea.

At no time does the trained seaman ever appear so great as when he meets sudden misfortunes with the steadiness and quiet which it is a material part of the *morale* of discipline to inculcate. Greenly was full of ardor for the assault, and was thinking of the best mode of running foul of his adversary, when this calamity occurred; but the masts were hardly down, when he changed all his thoughts to a new current, and called out to the sail-trimmers to "Lay over, and clear the wreck."

Sir Gervaise, too, met with a sudden and violent check to the current of his feelings. He had collected his Bowlderos, and was giving his instructions as to the manner in which they were to follow, and keep near his person, in the expected hand-to-hand encounter, when the heavy rushing of the air, and the swoop of the mass from above, announced what had occurred. Turning to the men he calmly ordered them to aid in getting rid of the incumbrances, and was in the very act of directing Wycherly to join in the same duty when the latter exclaimed:

"See, Sir Gervaise, here comes another of the Frenchmen close upon our quarter. By heavens, they must mean to board!"

The Vice-admiral instinctively grasped his sword-hilt tighter, and turned in the direction mentioned by his companion.

There, indeed, came a fresh ship, shoving the cloud aside, and by the clearer atmosphere that seemed to accompany her, apparently bringing down a current of air stronger than common. When first seen the jib-boom and bowsprit were both enveloped in smoke, but his bellying foretopsail, and the canvas hanging in festoons, loomed grandly in the vapors, the black yards seeming to embrace the wreaths, merely to cast them aside. The proximity, too, was fearful, her yardarms promising to clear those of the *Plantagenet* only by a few feet, as her dark bows brushed along the Admiral's side.

"This will be fearful work indeed!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise. "A fresh broadside from a ship so near will sweep all from the spars. Go, Wychecombe, tell Greenly to call in—Hold! 'Tis an English ship! No Frenchman's bowsprit stands like that! Almighty God be praised! 'Tis the *Cæsar!* there is the old Roman's figure-head just shoving out of the smoke!"

This was said with a yell, rather than a cry of delight, and in a voice so loud that the words were heard below, and flew through the ship like the hissing of an ascending rocket. To confirm the glorious tidings, the flash and roar of guns on the off side of the stranger announced the welcome tidings that *Le Pluton* had an enemy of her own to contend with, thus enabling the *Plantagenet's* people to throw all their strength on the starboard guns, and pursue their other necessary work without further molestation from the French rear-admiral.

The gratitude of Sir Gervaise as the rescuing ship thrust herself in between him and his most formidable assailant was too deep for language. He placed his hat mechanically before his face, and thanked God, with a fervor of spirit that never before had attended his thanksgivings. This brief act of devotion over, he found the bows of the *Cæsar*, which ship was advancing very slowly, in order not to pass too far ahead, just abreast of the spot where he stood, and so near that objects were pretty plainly visible. Between her knight-heads stood Bluewater, conning the ship by means of a line of officers, his hat in his hand, waving in encouragement to his own people, while Geoffrey Cleveland held the trumpet at his elbow. At that moment three noble cheers were given by the crews of the two friendly vessels, and mingled with the increasing roar of the *Cæsar's* artillery. Then the smoke rose in a cloud over the forecastle of the latter ship, and persons could no longer be distinguished.

Nevertheless, like all that thus approached, the relieving ship passed slowly ahead, until nearly her whole length protected the undefended side of her consort, delivering her fire with fearful rapidity. The Plantagenets seemed to imbibe new life from this arrival, and their starboard guns spoke out again, as if manned by giants. It was five minutes, perhaps, after this seasonable arrival, before the guns of the other ships of the English rear announced their presence on the outside of Monsieur des Prez's force; thus bringing the whole of the two fleets into four lines, all steering dead before the wind, and, as it were, interwoven with each other. By that time, the poops of the *Plantagenet* and *Cæsar* became visible from one to the other, the smoke now driving principally off from the vessels. There again were our two admirals each anxiously watching to get a glimpse of his friend. The instant the place was clear, Sir Gervaise applied the trumpet to his mouth and called out:

"God bless you, Dick! may God forever bless you—your ship can do it—clap your helm hard a-starboard, and sheer into M. des Prez; you'll have him in five minutes."

Bluewater smiled, waved his hand, gave an order, and laid aside his trumpet. Two minutes later, the *Cæsar* sheered into the smoke on her larboard beam, and the crash of the meeting vessels was heard. By this time, the wreck of the *Plantagenet* was cut adrift, and she, too, made a rank sheer, though in a direction opposite to that of the *Cæsar's*. As she went through the smoke, her guns ceased, and when she emerged into the pure air, it was found that *Le Foudroyant* had set course and topgallant-sails, and was

drawing so fast ahead as to render pursuit under the little sail that could be set, unprofitable. Signals were out of the question, but this movement of the two admirals converted the whole battle scene into one of inexplicable confusion. Ship after ship changed her position, and ceased her fire from uncertainty what that position was, until a general silence succeeded the roar of the cannonade. It was indispensable to pause and let the smoke blow away.

It did not require many minutes to raise the curtain on two fleets. As soon as the firing stopped, the wind increased, and the smoke was driven off to leeward in a vast, straggling cloud, that seemed to scatter and disperse in the air spontaneously. Then a sight of the havoc and destruction that had been done in this short conflict was first obtained.

The two squadrons were intermingled, and it required some little time for Sir Gervaise to get a clear idea of the state of his own ships. Generally, it might be said that the vessels were scattering, the French sheering toward their own coast, while the English were principally coming by the wind on the larboard tack, or heading toward England. The *Cæsar* and *Le Pluton* were still foul of each other, though a rear-admiral's flag was flying at the mizzen of the first, while that which had so lately fluttered at the royal-masthead of the other had disappeared.

The *Achilles*, Lord Morganic, was still among the French, more to leeward than any other English ship, without a single spar standing. Her ensigns were flying, notwithstanding, and the *Thunderer* and *Dublin*, both in tolerable order, were edging away rapidly to cover their crippled consort; though the nearest French vessels seemed more bent on getting out of the *mêlée*, and into their own line again, than on securing any advantage already obtained. *Le Temeraire* was in the same predicament as the *Achilles* as to spars, though much more injured in her hull, besides having thrice as many casualties. Her flag was down; the ship having fairly struck to the *Warspite*, whose boats were already alongside of her. *Le Foudroyant*, with quite one-third of her crew killed and wounded, was running off to leeward, with signals flying for her consorts to rally round her; but, within less than ten minutes after she became visible, her main and mizzen-masts both went.

The *Blenheim* had lost all her topmasts, like the *Plantagenet*, and neither the *Elizabeth* nor the *York* had a mizzen-mast standing, although engaged but a very short time. Several lower yards were shot away, or so much injured as to compel the ships to shorten sail; this accident having occured in both fleets. As for the damage done to the standing and running rigging, and to the sails, it is only necessary to say that shrouds, back and head stays, braces, bowlines and lifts, were dangling in all directions, while the canvas that was open exhibited all sorts of rents, from that which had been torn like cloth in the shopman's hands, to the little eyelet-holes of the canister and grape. It appeared, by the subsequent reports of the two parties, that, in this short but severe conflict, the slain and the wounded of the English amounted to seven hundred and sixty-three, including officers; and that of the French, to one thousand four hundred and twelve. The disparity in this respect would probably have been greater against the latter, had it not been for the manner in which M. des Prez succeeded in doubling on his enemies.

Little need be said in explanation of the parts of this battle that have not been distinctly related. M. des Prez had maneuvered in the manner he did at the commencement of the affair, in the hope of drawing Sir Gervaise down upon the division of the Comte de Vervillin; and no sooner did he see the first fairly enveloped in smoke, than he wore short round and joined in the affair, as has been mentioned. At this sight, Bluewater's loyalty to the Stuarts could resist no longer. Throwing out a general signal to engage, he squared away, set everything that would draw on the *Cæsar*, and arrived in time to save his friend. The other ships followed, engaging on the outside, for want of room to imitate their leader.

Two more of the French ships, at least, in addition to *Le Temeraire* and *Le Pluton*, might have been added to the list of prizes, had the actual condition of their fleet been known. But, at such moments, a combatant sees and feels his own injuries, while he has to conjecture many of those of his adversaries; and the English were too much occupied in making the provisions necessary to save their remaining spars, to risk much in order to swell an advantage that was already so considerable. Some distant firing passed between the *Thunderer* and *Dublin*, and *L'Ajax*, *Le Dugay Trouin*, and *L'Hector*, before the two former succeeded in getting Lord Morganic out of his difficulties; but it led to no material result; merely inflicting new injuries on certain spars that were sufficiently damaged before, and killing and wounding some fifteen or twenty men quite uselessly. As soon as the Vice-admiral saw what was likely to be the effect of this episode, he called off Captain O'Neil of the *Dublin*, by signal, he being an officer of a "hot temper," as the soldier said of himself at Waterloo. The compliance with this order may be said to have terminated the battle.

The reader will remember that the wind, at the commencement of the engagement, was at northwest. It was nearly "killed," as seamen express it, by the cannonade; then it revived a little, as the concussions of the guns gradually diminished. But the combined effect of the advance of the day, and the rushing of new currents of air to fill the vacuums produced by the burning of so much powder, was a sudden shift of wind; a breeze coming out strong, as it might be, in an instant, from the eastward.

This unexpected alteration in the direction and power of the wind cost the *Thunderer* her foremast, and did other damage to different ships; but, by dint of great activity and careful handling, all the English vessels got their heads round to the northward, while the French filled the other way, and went off free, steering nearly southeast, making the best of their way for Brest. The latter suffered still more than their enemies, by the change just mentioned; and when they reached port as did all but one on the following day, no less than three were towed in without a spar standing, bowsprits excepted.

The exception was *Le Caton*, which ship M. de Vervillin set fire to and blew up, on account of her damages, in the course of the afternoon. Thus of twelve noble two-decked ships with which this officer sailed from Cherbourg only two days before, he reached Brest with but seven.

Nor were the English entirely without their embarrassments. Although the *Warspite* had compelled *Le Temeraire* to strike, she was kept afloat herself with a good deal of difficulty, and that, too, not without considerable assistance from the other vessels. The leaks, however, were eventually stopped, and then the ship was given up to the care of her own crew. Other vessels suffered, of course, but no English ship was in as much jeopardy as this.

The first hour after the action ceased, was one of great exertion and anxiety to our Admiral. He called the *Chloe* alongside by signal, and, attended by Wycherly and his own quartermasters, Galleygo, who went without orders, and the Bowlderos who were unhurt, he shifted his flag to that frigate. Then he immediately commenced passing from vessel to vessel, in order to ascertain the actual condition of his command. The *Achilles* detained him some time, and he was near her, or to leeward, when the wind shifted which was bringing him to windward in the present state of things. Of this advantage he availed himself, by urging the different ships off as fast as possible; and long before the sun was in the meridian, all the English vessels were making the best of their way toward the land, with the intention of fetching into Plymouth if possible; if not, into the nearest and best anchorage to leeward. The progress of the fleet was relatively slow, as a matter of course, though it got along at the rate of some five knots, by making a free wind of it.

The master of the *Chloe* had just taken the sun, in order to ascertain his latitude,

when the Vice-admiral commanded Denham to set topgallant sails, and go within hail of the *Cæsar*. That ship had got clear of *Le Pluton* half an hour after the action ceased and she was now leading the fleet with her three topsails on the caps. Aloft she had suffered comparatively little; but Sir Gervaise knew that there must have been a serious loss of men in carrying, hand to hand, a vessel like that of M. de Prez. He was anxious to see his friend, and hear the manner in which his success had been obtained, and, we might add, to remonstrate with Bluewater on a course that had led the latter to the verge of a most dangerous abyss.

The *Chloe* was half an hour running through the fleet, which was a good deal extended, and was sailing without any regard to a line. Sir Gervaise had many questions to ask, too, of the different commanders in passing. At last the frigate overtook the *Le Temeraire*, which vessel was following the *Cæsar* under easy canvas. As the *Chloe* came up abeam, Sir Gervaise appeared in the gangway of the frigate, and, hat in hand, he asked with an accent that was intelligible, though it might not have absolutely stood the test of criticism—

"Le Vice-admiral Oakes demande comment se porte-il, le contre-amiral, le Vicomte des Prez?"

A little elderly man, dressed with extreme care, with a powdered head, but of a firm step and perfectly collected expression of countenance, appeared on the verge of *Le Temeraire's* poop, trumpet in hand, to reply.

"Le Vicomte des Prez remercie bien Monsieur le Chevalier Oake, et desire vivement de savoir comment se porte Monsieur le Vice-amiral?"

Mutual waves of trumpets served as replies to the questions, and then, after taking a moment to muster his French, Sir Gervaise continued:

"J'espere voir Monsieur le Contre-Amiral a diner a cinq heures, precis."

The Vicomte smiled at this characteristic manifestation of good will and courtesy; and after pausing an instant to choose an expression to soften his refusal, and to express his own sense of the motive of the invitation, he called out:

"Veuillez bien receivoir nos excuses pour aujourdhui, Mons. le Chevalier. Nous n'avons pas encore digere le repas si noble recu a vos mains comme dêjeuner."

The *Chloe* passing ahead, bows terminated the interview. Sir Gervaise's French was at fault, for what between the rapid, neat pronunciation of the Frenchman, the trumpet, and the turn of the expression, he did not comprehend the meaning of the Contre-amiral.

"What does he say, Wychecombe?" he asked eagerly of the young man. "Will he come or not?"

"Upon my word, Sir Gervaise, French is a sealed language to me. Never having been a prisoner, no opportunity has offered for acquiring the language. As I understood, you intended to ask him to dinner; I rather think, from his countenance, he meant to say he was not in spirits for the entertainment."

"Pooh! we would have put him in spirits, and Bluewater could have talked to him in his own tongue by the fathom. We will close with the *Cæsar* to leeward, Denham; never mind rank on an occasion like this. It's time to let the topgallant-halyards run; you'll have to settle your topsails, too, or we shall shoot past her. Bluewater may take it as a salute to his gallantry in carrying so fine a ship in so handsome a manner."

Several minutes now passed in silence, during which the fleet was less and less rapidly closing with the larger vessel, drawing ahead toward the last, as it might be, foot by foot. Sir Gervaise got upon one of the quarter-deck guns and steadying himself against the hammock-cloths he was in readiness to exchange the greetings he was accustomed to give and to receive from his friend, in the same heartfelt manner as if nothing had occurred to disturb the harmony of their feelings. The single glance of the eye, the waving of the hat, and the noble manner in which Bluewater interposed between him and his most dangerous enemy, was still present to his mind, and disposed him even more

than common to the kindest feelings of his nature. Stowel was already on the poop of the *Cæsar*, and, as the *Chloe* came slowly on, he raised his hat in deference to the commander-in-chief. It was a point of delicacy with Sir Gervaise never to interfere with any subordinate flag-officer's vessel any more than duty rigidly required; consequently his communications with the captain of the *Cæsar* had usually been of a general nature, verbal orders and criticisms being studiously avoided. The circumstances rendered the commander-in-chief even a greater favorite than common with Stowel, who had all his own way in his own ship, in consequence of the Rear-admiral's indifference to such matters.

"How do you do, Stowel?" called out Sir Gervaise cordially. "I am delighted to see you on your legs, and hope the old Roman is not much the worse for this day's treatment."

"I thank you, Sir Gervaise, we are both afloat yet, though we have passed through warm times. The ship is damaged, sir, as you may suppose; and, though it stands so bravely, and looks so upright, that foremast of ours is as good as a condemned spar. One thirty-two through the heart of it, about ten feet from the deck, an eighteen in the hounds, and a double-header sticking in one of the hoops! A spar cannot be counted for much that has as many holes in it as those, sir?"

"Deal tenderly with it, my old friend, and spare the canvas; those chaps at Plymouth will set all to rights, again, in a week. Hoops can be had for asking, and as for holes in the heart, many a poor fellow has had them, and lived through it all. You are a case in point; Mrs. Stowel not having spared you in that way, I'll answer for it."

"Mrs. Stowel commands ashore, Sir Gervaise, and I command afloat; and in that way, we keep a quiet ship and a quiet house, I thank you, sir; and I endeavor to think of her, at sea, as little as possible."

"Aye, that's the way with you doting husbands, always ashamed of your own lively sensibilities. But what has become of Bluewater? Does he know that we are alongside?"

Stowel looked round, cast his eyes up at the sails, and played with the hilt of his sword. The rapid eye of the commander-in-chief detected this embarrassment, and quick as thought he demanded what had happened.

"Why, Sir Gervaise, you know how it is with some admirals, who like to be in everything. I told our respected and beloved friend that he had nothing to do with boarding; that if either of us was to go, *I* was the proper man; but that we ought both to stick by the ship. He answered something about lost honor and duty, and you know, sir, what legs he has when he wishes to use them! One might as well think of stopping a deserter by hallo; away he went, with the first party, sword in hand, a sight I never saw before, and never wish to see again! Thus you see how it was, sir."

The commander-in-chief compressed his lips, until his features, and indeed his whole form was a picture of desperate resolution, though his face was as pale as death, and the muscles of his mouth twitched, in spite of all his physical self-command.

"I understand you, sir," he said, in a voice that seemed to issue from his chest; "you wish to say that Admiral Bluewater is killed."

"No, thank God! Sir Gervaise, not quite as bad as that, though sadly hurt; yes, indeed, very sadly hurt!"

Sir Gervaise Oakes groaned, and for a few minutes he leaned his head on the hammock-cloths, veiling his face from the sight of men. Then he raised his person erect, and said, steadily:

"Run your topsails to the masthead, Captain Stowel, and round your ship to. I will come on board of you."

An order was given to Denham to take room, when the *Chloe* came to the wind on one tack and the *Cæsar* on the other. This was contrary to rule, as it increased the distance between the ships; but the Vice-admiral was impatient to be in his barge. In ten minutes he was mounting the *Cæsar's* side, and in two more he was

in Bluewater's main-cabin. Geoffrey Cleveland was seated by the table with his face buried in his arms. Touching his shoulder, the boy raised his head, and showed a face covered with tears.

"How is he, boy?" demanded Sir Gervaise, hoarsely. "Do the surgeons give any hopes?"

The midshipman shook his head, and then, as if the question renewed his grief, he again buried his face in his arms. At this moment, the surgeon of the ship came from the Rear-admiral's stateroom, and following the commander-in-chief into the after-cabin, they had a long conference together.

Minute after minute passed, and *Cæsar* and *Chloe* still lay with their main-topsails aback. At the end of half an hour, Denham wore round and laid the head of his frigate in the proper direction. Ship after ship came up, and went on to the northward, fast as her crippled state would allow, yet no sign of movement was seen in the *Cæsar*. Two sail had appeared in the southeastern board, and they, too, approached and passed without bringing the Vice-admiral even on deck. These ships proved to be the *Carnatic* and her prize, *La Scipion*, which latter ship had been intercepted and easily captured by the former. The steering of M. de Vervillin to the southwest had left a clear passage to the two ships, which were coming down with a free wind at a handsome rate of sailing. This news was sent into the *Cæsar's* cabin, but it brought no person and no answer out of it. At length, when every thing had gone ahead, the barge returned to the *Chloe*. It merely took a note, however, which was no sooner read by Wycherly, than he summoned the Bowlderos and Galleygo, had all the Vice-admiral's luggage passed into the boat, struck his flag, and took his leave of Denham. As soon as the boat was clear of the frigate, the latter made all sail after the fleet, to resume her ordinary duties of a lookout and a repeating-ship.

As soon as Wycherly reached the *Cæsar*, that ship hoisted in the Vice-admiral's barge. A report was made to Sir Gervaise of what had been done, and then an order came on deck that occasioned all in the fleet to stare with surprise. The red flag of Sir Gervaise Oakes was run up at the fore royal-masthead of the *Cæsar*, while the white flag of the Rear-admiral was still flying at her mizzen. Such a thing had never before been known to happen, if it has ever happened since: and to the time when she was subsequently lost, the *Cæsar* was known as the double flagship.

CHAPTER XXIX.

We shall now ask permission of the reader to advance the time just eight-and-forty hours; a liberty with the unities which he will do us the justice to say, we have not often taken. We must also transfer the scene to that already described, at Wychecombe, including the Head, the station, the roads, and the inland and seaward views. Summer weather had returned, too, the pennants of the ships at anchor scarce streaming from their masts far enough to form curved lines. Most of the English fleet was among those vessels, though the squadron had undergone some changes. The *Druid* had gone into Portsmouth with *La Victoire;* the *Driver* and *Active* had made the best of their way to the nearest ports, with dispatches for the Admiralty; and the *Achilles*, in tow of the *Dublin*, with the *Chloe* to take care of both, had gone to leeward. with square yards, in the hope of making Falmouth. The rest of the force was present, the crippled ships having been towed into the roads that morning. The picture among the shipping was one of extreme activity and liveliness. Jury-masts were going up in the *Warspite;* lower and topsail-yards were down to be fished, or new ones were rigging to be sent aloft in their places; the *Plantagenet* was all a-tanto, again, in readiness for another action, with rigging secured and masts fished, while none but an instructed eye could have detected, at a short distance, that the *Cæsar, Carnatic, Dover, York, Elizabeth,* and one or two more, had been in the action at all.

The landing was crowded with boats as before, the gunroom servants and midshipmen's boys were foraging as usual; some with honest intent to find delicacies for the wounded, but more with the roguish design of contributing to the comforts of the unhurt, by making appeals to the sympathies of the women of the neighborhood, in behalf of the hurt.

The principal transformation that had been brought about by this state of things, however, was apparent at the station. This spot had the appearance of a place to which the headquarters of an army had been transferred, in the vicissitudes of the field; warlike sailors, if not soldiers, flocking to it as the center of interest and intelligence. Still there was a singularity observable in the manner in which these heroes of the deck paid their court; the cottage being seemingly tabooed, or, at most, approached by very few while the grass at the foot of the flag-staff was already beginning to show proofs of the pressure of many feet. This particular spot, indeed, was the center of attraction; there, officers of all rank and ages were constantly arriving, and thence they were as often departing; all bearing countenances sobered by anxiety and apprehension. Notwithstanding the constant mutations, there had been no instant since the rising of the sun, when some ten or twelve, at least, including captains, lieutenants, masters, and idlers, had not been collected around the bench at the foot of the signal-staff, and not unfrequently the company reached even double that number.

A little retired from the crowd, and near the verge of the cliff, a large tent had been pitched. A marine paced in its front, as a sentinel. Another stood near the gate of the little dooryard of the cottage, and all the persons who approached either, with the exception of a few of the privileged, were referred to the sergeant who commanded the guard. The arms of the latter were stacked on the grass, at hand, and the men off post were loitering near. These were the usual military signs of the presence of officers of rank, and may, in sooth, be taken as clew to the actual state of things, on and around the Head.

Admiral Bluewater lay in the cottage, while Sir Gervaise Oakes occupied the tent. The former had been transferred to the place where he was about to breathe his last, at his own urgent request, while his friend had refused to be separated from him, so long as life remained. The two flags were still flying at the mast-heads of the *Cæsar*, a sort of melancholy memorial of the tie that had so long bound their gallant owners in the strong sympathies of an enduring personal and professional friendship.

Persons of the education of Mrs. Dutton and her daughter had not dwelt so long on that beautiful headland, without leaving on the spot some lasting impressions of their tastes. Of the cottage, we have already spoken. The little garden, too, then bright with flowers, had a grace and refinement about it that we would hardly have expected to meet in such a place; and even the paths that led athwart the verdant common which spread over so much of the upland, had been directed with an eye to the picturesque and agreeable. One of these paths, too, led to a rustic summer-house — a sort of small, rude pavilion, constructed, like the fences, of fragments of wrecks, and placed on a shelf of the cliff, at a dizzy elevation, but in perfect security. So far from there being any danger in erecting this summer-house, indeed, Wycherly, during his six months' residence near the Head, had made a path that descended still lower, to a point that was utterly concealed from all eyes above, and had actually planted a seat on another shelf with so much security, that both Mildred and her mother often visited it in company. During the young man's recent absence, the poor girl, indeed, had passed much of her time there, weeping and suffering in solitude. To this seat, Dutton never ventured; the descent, though well protected with ropes, requiring greater steadiness of foot and head than intemperance had left him. Once or twice, Wycherly had induced Mildred to pass an hour with him alone in this romantic place, and some of his swe

est recollections of this just-minded and intelligent girl were connected with the frank communications that had there occurred between them. On this bench he was seated at the time of the opening of the present chapter.

The movement on the Head, and about the cottage, was so great as to deprive him of every chance of seeing Mildred alone, and he had hoped that, led by some secret sympathy, she, too, might seek this perfectly retired seat, to obtain a moment of unobserved solitude, if not from some dearer motive. He had not waited long, ere he heard a heavy foot over his head, and a man entered the summer-house. He was yet debating whether to abandon all hopes of seeing Mildred, when his acute ear caught her light and well-known footstep, as she reached the summer-house, also.

"Father, I have come as you desired," said the poor girl, in those tremulous tones which Wycherly too well understood, not to imagine the condition of Dutton. "Admiral Bluewater dozes, and mother has permitted me to steal away.

"Aye, Admiral Bluewater is a great man, though but little better than a dead one!" answered Dutton, as harshly in manner as the language was coarse. "You and your mother are all attention to him; did I lie in his place, which of you would be found hanging over my bed, with pale cheeks and tearful eyes?"

"Both of us, father! Do not—do not think so ill of your wife and daughter, as to suppose it possible that either of them could forget her duty."

"Yes, duty might do something, perhaps; what has duty to do with this useless Rear-admiral? I hate the scoundrel—he was one of the court that cashiered me; and one, too, that I am told, was the most obstinate in refusing to help me into this pitiful berth of a master."

Mildred was silent. She could not vindicate her friend without criminating her father. As for Wycherly, he would have given a year's income to be at sea; yet he shrank from wounding the poor daughter's feelings by letting her know he overheard the dialogue. This indecision made him the unwilling auditor of a conversation that he ought not to have heard—an occurrence which, had there been time for reflection, he would have taken means to prevent.

"Sit you down here, Mildred," resumed Dutton, sternly, "and listen to what I have to say. It is time that there should no longer be any trifling between us. You have the fortunes of your mother and myself in your hands; and, as one of the parties so deeply concerned, I am determined mine shall be settled at once."

"I do not understand you, father," said Mildred, with a tremor in her voice that almost induced the young man to show himself, though we owe it to truth to say that a lively curiosity now mingled with his other sensations. "How can I have the keeping of dear mother's fortunes and yours?"

"Dear mother, truly! Dear enough has she proved to me; but I intend the daughter shall pay for it. Hark you, Mildred; I'll have no more trifling—but I ask you in a father's name, if any man has offered you his hand? Speak plainly, and conceal nothing—I will be answered."

"I wish to conceal nothing, father, that ought to be told; but when a young woman declines the honor that another does her in this way, ought she to reveal the secret, even to her father?"

"She ought; and in your case, she shall. No more hesitation; name *one* of the offers you have had."

Mildred, after a brief pause, in a low, tremulous voice, pronounced the name of "Mr. Rotherham."

"I suspected as much," growled Dutton; "there was a time when he might have answered, but we can do better than that now. Still he may be kept as a reserve; the thousand pounds Mr. Thomas says shall be paid, and that and the living will make a comfortable port after a stormy life. Well, who next, Mildred? Has Mr. Thomas Wychecombe ever come to the point?"

"He has asked me to become his wife, within the last twenty-four hours; if that is what you mean."

"No affectations, Milly; I can't bear

them. You know well enough what I mean. What was your answer?"

"I do not love him in the least, father, and, of course, I told him I could not marry him."

"That don't follow of course, by any means, girl! The marrying is done by the priest, and the love is a very different thing. I hope you consider Mrs. Dutton as my wife?"

"What a question!" murmured Mildred.

"Well, and do you suppose she loves me; can love me, now I am a disgraced, impoverished man?"

"Father!"

"Come, come—enough of this. Mr. Thomas Wychecombe may not be legitimate—I rather think he is not, by the proofs Sir Reginald has produced within the last day or two; and I understand his own mother is dissatisfied with him, and that will knock his claim flat aback. Nothwithstanding, Mildred, Tom Wychecombe has a good six hundred a year already, and Sir Reginald himself admits that he must take all the personal property the Baronet could leave."

"You forget, father," said Mildred, conscious of the inefficacy of any other appeal, "that Mr. Thomas has promised to pay the legacies that Sir Wycherly intended to leave."

"Don't place any expectations on that, Mildred. I dare say he would settle ten of the twenty thousand on you to-morrow, if you would consent to have him. But, now, as to this new baronet, for it seems he is to have both title and estate—has he ever offered?"

There was a long pause, during which Wycherly thought he heard the hard but suppressed breathing of Mildred. To remain quiet any longer, he felt was impossible, as indeed, his conscience told him it was dishonorable, and he sprang along the path to ascend to the summer-house. At the first sound of his footstep, a faint cry escaped Mildred; but when Wycherly entered the pavilion, he found her face buried in her hands, and Dutton tottering forward, equally in surprise and alarm. As the circumstances would not admit of evasion, the young man threw aside all reserve, and spoke plainly.

"I have been an unwilling listener to a part of your discourse with Mildred, Mr. Dutton," he said, "and can answer your last question for myself. I have offered my hand to your daughter, sir; an offer that I now renew, and the acceptance of which would make me the happiest man in England. If your influence could aid me—for she has refused my hand——"

"Refused!" exclaimed Dutton, in a surprise that overcame the calculated amenity of manner he had assumed the instant Wycherly appeared, "Refused, Sir Wycherly Wychecombe! but is was before your rights had been as well established as they now are. Mildred, answer to this—how could you—nay, how dare you refuse such an offer as this?"

Human nature could not well endure more. Mildred suffered her hands to fall helplessly into her lap, and exposed a face that was lovely as that of an angel, though pale nearly to the hue of death. Feeling extorted the answer she made, though the words had hardly escaped her ere she repented having uttered them, and had again buried her face in her hands.

"Father," she said, "could I—dare I to encourage Sir Wycherly Wychecombe to unite himself to a family like ours!"

Conscience smote Dutton with a force that nearly sobered him, and what explanation might have followed it is hard to say. Wycherly, in an undertone, however, requested to be left alone with his daughter. Dutton had sense enough to understand he was *de trop*, and shame enough to wish to escape. In half a minute, he had hobbled up to the summit of the cliff and disappeared.

"Mildred! Dearest Mildred!" said Wycherly, tenderly, gently endeavoring to draw her attention to himself, "we are alone now; surely—surely—you will not refuse to look at me!"

"Is he gone?" asked Mildred, dropping her hands, and looking wildly around. "Thank God! It is over, for this time, at least! Now, let us go to the house; Admiral Bluewater may miss me."

"No, Mildred, not yet. You surely can spare me—me, who have suffered so much of late on your account—nay, by your means—you can, in mercy, spare me a few short minutes. Was this the reason—the only reason, dearest girl, why you so pertinaciously refused my hand?"

"Was it not sufficient, Wycherly?" answered Mildred, afraid the chartered air might hear her secret. "Remember who you are, and what I am! Could I suffer you to become the husband of one to whom such cruel, cruel propositions had been made by her own father!"

"I shall not affect to conceal my horror of such principles, Mildred, but your virtues shine all the brighter by having flourished in their company. Answer me but one question, frankly, and every other difficulty can be gotten over. Do you love me well enough to be my wife, were you an orphan?"

Mildred's countenance was full of anguish, but this question changed its expression entirely. The moment was extraordinary, as were the feelings it engendered, and, almost unconsciously to herself, she raised the hand that held her own to her lips, in a sort of reverence. In the next instant she was encircled in the young man's arms, and pressed with fervor to his heart.

"Let us go," said Mildred, extricating herself from an embrace that was too involuntarily bestowed, and too heartfelt to alarm her delicacy. "I feel certain that Admiral Bluewater will miss me!"

"No, Mildred, we cannot part thus. Give me, at least, the poor consolation of knowing, that if this difficulty did not exist—that if you were an orphan, for instance—you would be mine!"

"Oh! Wycherly, how gladly—how gladly! But, say no more—nay——"

This time the embrace was longer, more fervent even than before, and Wycherly was too much of a sailor to let the sweet girl escape from his arms without imprinting on her lips a kiss. He had no sooner relinquished his hold of the slight person of Mildred, than it vanished. With this characteristic leave-taking, we change the scene to the tent of Sir Gervaise Oakes.

"You have seen Admiral Bluewater?" demanded the commander-in-chief, as soon as the form of Magrath darkened the entrance, and speaking with the sudden earnestness of a man determined to know the worst. "If so, tell me at once what hopes there are for him?"

"Of all the human passions, Sir Jairvis," answered Magrath, looking aside, to avoid the keen glance of the other, "hope is generally considered, by all rational men, as the most treacherous and delusive; I may add, of all denominations or divisions of hope, that which decides on life is the most unsartain. We all hope to live, I'm thinking, to a good old age, and yet how many of us live just long enough to be disappointed!"

Sir Gervaise did not move until the surgeon ceased speaking; then he began to pace the tent in mournful silence. He understood Magrath's manner so well, that the last faint hope he had felt from seeking his opinion was gone; he now knew that his friend must die. It required all his fortitude to stand up against this blow; for, single, childless, and accustomed to each other from infancy, these two veteran sailors had got to regard themselves as merely isolated parts of the same being. Magrath was affected more than he chose to express, and he blew his nose several times in a way that any observer would have found suspicious.

"Will you confer on me the favor, Dr. Magrath," said Sir Gervaise, in a gentle, subdued manner, "to ask Captain Greenly to come hither, as you pass the flag-staff?"

"Most willingly, Sir Jairvis; and I know he'll be anything but backward in complying."

It was not long ere the captain of the *Plantagenet* made his appearance. Like all around him, the recent victory appeared to bring no exultation.

"I suppose Magrath told you all?" said the Vice-admiral, squeezing the other's hand.

"He gives no hopes, Sir Gervaise, I sincerely regret to say."

"I knew as much! I knew as much! and yet he is easy, Greenly—nay, even seems happy. I did feel a little hope that this absence from suffering might be a favorable omen."

"I am glad to hear that much, sir; for I have been thinking that it is my duty to speak to the Rear-admiral on the subject of his brother's marriage. From his own silence on the subject, it is possible—nay, from all circumstances it is probable he never knew of it, and there may be reasons why he ought to be informed of the affair. As you say he is so easy, would there be an impropriety in mentioning it to him?"

Greenly could not possibly have made a suggestion that was a greater favor to Sir Gervaise. The necessity of doing, his habits of decision, and having an object in view, contributed to relieve his mind by diverting his thoughts to some active duty; and he seized his hat, beckoned to Greenly to follow, and moved across the hill with a rapid pace, taking the path to the cottage. It was necessary to pass the flag-staff. As this was done, every countenance met the Vice-admiral's glance with a look of sincere sympathy. The bows that were exchanged had more in them than the naked courtesies of such salutations; they were eloquent of feeling on both sides.

Bluewater was awake, and retaining the hand of Mildred affectionately in his own, when his friend entered. Relinquishing his hold, however, he grasped the hand of the Vice-admiral, and looked earnestly at him, as if he pitied the sorrow that he knew the survivor must feel.

"My dear Bluewater," commenced Sir Gervaise, who acted under a nervous excitement, as well as from constitutional decision, "here is Greenly with something to tell you that we both think you ought to know, at a moment like this."

The Rear-admiral regarded his friend intently, as if inviting him to proceed.

"Why, it's about your brother Jack. I fancy you cannot have known that he was ever married, or I think I should have heard you speak of it."

"Married!" repeated Bluewater, with great interest, and speaking with very little difficulty. "I think that must be an error. Inconsiderate and warm-hearted he was, but there is only one woman he could, nay, would have married. She is long since dead, but not as his wife; for that her uncle, a man of great wealth, but of unbending will, would never have suffered. He survived her, though my poor brother did not."

This was said in a mild voice, for the wounded man spoke equally without effort, and without pain.

"You hear, Greenly?" observed Sir Gervaise. "And yet it is not probable that you should be mistaken."

"Certainly, I am not, gentlemen. I saw Colonel Bluewater married, as did another officer who is at this moment in this very fleet. Captain Blakely is the person I mean, and I know that the priest who performed the ceremony is still living, a beneficed clergyman."

"That is wonderful to me! He fervently loved Agnes Hedworth, but his poverty was an obstacle to the union; and both died so young, that, there was little opportunity of conciliating the uncle."

"That, sir, is your mistake. Agnes Hedworth was the bride."

A noise in the room interrupted the dialogue, and the three gentlemen saw Wycherly and Mildred stooping to pick up the fragments of a bowl that Mrs. Dutton had let fall. The latter, apparently in alarm at the little accident, had sank back into a seat, pale and trembling.

"My dear Mrs. Dutton, take a glass of water," said Sir Gervaise, kindly approaching her; "your nerves have been sorely tried of late; else would not such a trifle affect you."

"It is not that!" exclaimed the matron, huskily. "It is not that! O! the fearful moment has come at last; and, from my inmost spirit I thank Thee, my Lord and my God, that it has come free from shame and disgrace!"

The closing words were uttered on bended knees, and with uplifted hands.

"Mother! dearest, dearest, mother," cried Mildred, falling on her mother's

neck. "What mean you? Tell me, what new misery has happened to-day?"

"Mother! Yes, sweet one, thou art, thou ever shalt be my child! This is the pang I have most dreaded; but what is an unknown tie of blood, to us, and affection, and to a mother's care? If I did not bear thee, Mildred, no natural mother could have loved thee more, or would have died for thee, as willingly!"

"Distress has disturbed her, gentlemen," said Mildred, gently extricating herself from her mother's arms, and helping her to rise. "A few moments of rest will restore her."

"No, darling; it must come now—it ought to come now—after what I have just heard, it would be unpardonable not to tell it, now. Did I understand you to say, sir, that you were present at the marriage of Agnes Hedworth, and, that, too, with the brother of Admiral Bluewater?"

"Of that fact there can be no question, madam. I and others will testify to it. The marriage took place in London, in the summer of 1725, while Blakely and myself were up from Portsmouth, on leave. Colonel Bluewater asked us both to be present, under a pledge of secrecy."

"And in the summer of 1726 Agnes Hedworth died in my house and my arms, an hour after giving birth to this dear, this precious child—Mildred Dutton, as she has ever since been called—Mildred Bluewater, as it would seem her name should be."

It is unnecessary to dwell on the surprise with which all present, or the delight with which Bluewater and Wycherly heard this extraordinary announcement. A cry escaped Mildred, who threw herself on Mrs. Dutton's neck, entwining it with her arms, convulsively, as if refusing to permit the tie that had so long bound them together, to be thus rudely torn asunder. But half an hour of weeping, and of the tenderest consolations, calmed the poor girl a little, and she was able to listen to the explanations. These were exceedingly simple, and so clear as, in connection with the other evidence, to put the facts out of all doubt.

Miss Hedworth had become known to Mrs. Dutton, while the latter was an intimate in the house of her patron. A year or two after the marriage of the lieutenant, and while he was on a distant station, Agnes Hedworth threw herself on the protection of his wife, asking a refuge for a woman in the most critical circumstances. Like all who knew Agnes Hedworth, Mrs. Dutton both respected and loved her; but the distance created between them, by birth and station, was such as to prevent any confidence. The former, for the few days passed with her humble friend, had acted with the quiet dignity of a woman conscious of no wrong; and no questions could be asked that implied doubts. A succession of fainting fits prevented all communications in the hour of death, and Mrs. Dutton found herself left with a child on her hands, and the dead body of her friend. Miss Hedworth had come to her dwelling unattended, and under a false name. These circumstances induced Mrs. Dutton to apprehend the worst, and she proceeded to make her arrangements with great tenderness for the reputation of the deceased. The body was removed to London, and letters were sent to the uncle to inform him where it was to be found, with a reference, should he choose to inquire into the circumstances of his niece's death. Mrs. Dutton ascertained that the body was interred in the usual manner, but no inquiry was ever made, concerning the particulars.

The young duchess, Miss Hedworth's sister, was then traveling in Italy, whence she did not return for more than a year; and we may add, though Mrs. Dutton was unable to make the explanation, that her inquiries after the fate of a beloved sister, were met by a simple statement that she had died suddenly, on a visit to a watering-place, whither she had gone with a female friend for her health. Whether Mr. Hedworth himself had any suspicions of his niece's condition, is uncertain; but the probabilities were against it, for she had offended him by refusing a match in all respects equal to that made

by her elder sister, with the single exception that the latter had married a man she loved, whereas he exacted of Agnes a very different sacrifice. Owing to the alienation produced by this affair, there was little communication between the uncle and niece; the latter passing her time in retirement and professedly with friends that the former neither knew nor cared to know. In short, such was the mode of life of the respective parties, that nothing was easier than for the unhappy young widow to conceal her state from her uncle. The motive was the fortune of the expected child; this uncle having it in his power to alienate from it, by will, if he saw fit, certain family property, that might otherwise descend to the issue of the two sisters, as his co-heiresses. What might have happened in the end, or what poor Agnes meditated doing, can never be known; death closing the secret with his irremovable seal.

Mrs. Dutton was the mother of a girl but three months old, at the time this little stranger was left on her hands. A few weeks later her own child died; and having waited several months in vain for tidings from the Hedworth family, she had the surviving infant christened by the same name as that borne by her own daughter, and soon came to love it, as much, perhaps, as if she had borne it. Three years passed in this manner, when the time grew near for the return of her husband from the East Indies. To be ready to meet him, she changed her abode to a naval port, and, in so doing, changed her domestics. This left her accidentally, but fortunately, as she afterward thought, completely mistress of the secret of Mildred's birth; the one or two others to whom it was known being in stations to render it improbable they should ever communicate anything on the subject, unless it was asked of them. Her original intention, however, was to commuuicate the fact, without reserve, to her husband. But he came back an altered man; brutal in manners, cold in his affections, and the victim of drunkenness. By this time, the wife was too much attached to the child to think of exposing it to the wayward caprices of such a being; and Mildred was educated, and grew in stature and beauty as the real offspring of her reputed parents.

All this Mrs. Dutton related clearly and briefly, refraining, of course, from making any allusion to the conduct of her husband, and referring all her own benevolence to attachment to the child. Bluewater had strength enough to receive Mildred in his arms, and he kissed her pale cheek, again and again, blessing her in the most fervent and solemn manner.

"My feelings were not treacherous or unfaithful," he said; "I loved thee, sweetest, from the first. Sir Gervaise Oakes has my will, made in thy favor, before we sailed on this last cruise, and every shilling I leave will be thine. Mr. Atwood, procure that will, and add a codicil explaining this recent discovery, and confirming the legacy; let not the last be touched, for it is spontaneous and comes from the heart."

"And now," answered Mrs. Dutton, "enough has passed for once. The sick-bed should be more quiet. Give me my child, again; I cannot yet consent to part with her forever."

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed Mildred, throwing herself on Mrs. Dutton's bosom, "I am yours, and yours only."

"Not so, I fear, Mildred, if all I suspect be true, and this is as proper a moment as another to place that matter also before your honored uncle. Come forward, Sir Wycherly, I have understood you to say, this minute, in my ear, that you hold the pledge of this willful girl to become your wife, should she ever become an orphan. An orphan she is, and has been since the first hour of her birth."

"No—no," murmured Mildred, burying her face still deeper in her mother's bosom, "not while you live, can I be an orphan. Not now—another time; this is unseasonable—cruel; nay, it is not what I said."

"Take her away, dearest Mrs. Dutton," said Bluewater, tears of joy forcing themselves from his eyes. "Take her away, lest too much happiness comes

upon me at once. My thoughts should be calmer at such a moment."

Wycherly removed Mildred from her mother's arms, and gently led her from the room. When in Mrs. Dutton's apartment, he whispered something in the ear of the agitated girl that caused her to turn on him a look of happiness, though it came dimmed with tears; then he had his turn of holding her, for another precious instant, to his heart.

"My dear Mrs. Dutton—nay, my dear mother," he said, "Mildred and myself have both need of parents. I am an orphan like herself, and we can never consent to part with you. Look forward, I entreat you, to making one of our family in all things, for never can Mildred or myself cease to consider you as a parent entitled to more than common reverence and affection."

Wycherly had hardly uttered this proper speech, when he received what he fancied a tenfold reward. Mildred, in a burst of natural feeling, without affectation or reserve, but yielding to her heart only, threw her arms around his neck, murmured the word "Thanks" several times, and wept freely on his bosom. When Mrs. Dutton received the sobbing girl from him, Wycherly kissed the mother's cheek, and he left the room.

Admiral Bluewater would not consent to seek his repose until he had a private conference with his friend and Wycherly. The latter was frankness and liberality itself, but the former would not wait for settlements. These he trusted to the young man's honor. His own time was short, and he should die perfectly happy could he leave his niece in the care of one like our Virginian. He wished the marriage to take place in his presence. On this, he even insisted, and, of course, Wycherly made no objections, but went to state the case to Mrs. Dutton and Mildred.

"It is singular, Dick," said Sir Gervaise, wiping his eyes, as he looked from a window that commanded a view of the sea, "that I have left both our flags flying in the *Cæsar!* I declare, the oddness of the circumstance never struck me till this minute."

"Let them float thus a little longer, Gervaise. They have faced many a gale and many a battle together, and may endure each other's company a few hours longer."

CHAPTER XXX.

"Compound of weakness and of strength,
Mighty, yet ignorant of thy power!
Loftier than earth, or air, or sea,
Yet meaner than the lowliest flower!"
—MARGARET DAVIDSON.

NOT a syllable of explanation, reproach, or self-accusation had passed between the commander-in-chief and the rear-admiral, since the latter received his wound. Each party appeared to blot out the events of the last few days, leaving the long vista of their past services and friendship undisfigured by a single unsightly or unpleasant object. Sir Gervaise, while he retained an active superintendence of his fleet, and issued the necessary orders right and left, hovered around the bed of Bluewater with the assiduity and almost with the tenderness of a woman; still not the slightest allusion was made to the recent battles, or to anything that had occurred in the short cruise. The speech recorded at the close of the last chapter was the first words he had uttered which might, in any manner, carry the mind of either back to events that both might wish forgotten. The rear-admiral felt this forbearance deeply, and now that the subject was thus accidentally broached between them, he had a desire to say something in continuation. Still he waited until the baronet had left the window and taken a seat by his bed.

"Gervaise," Bluewater then commenced, speaking low from weakness, but speaking distinctly from feeling, "I cannot die without asking your forgiveness. There were several hours when I actually meditated treason—I will not say to my king; on that point my opinions are unchanged—but to you."

"Why speak of this, Dick? You did not know yourself when you believed it possible to desert me in the face of the enemy. How much better I judged of your charac-

ter, is seen in the fact that I did not hesitate to engage double my force, well knowing that you could not fail to come to my rescue."

Bluewater looked intently at his friend, and a smile of serious satisfaction passed over his pallid countenance as he listened to Sir Gervaise's words, which were uttered with his usual warmth and sincerity of manner.

"I believe you know me better than I know myself," he answered, after a thoughtful pause; "yes, better than I know myself. What a glorious close to our professional career would it have been, Oakes, had I followed you into battle, as was our old practice, and fallen in your wake, imitating your own high example!"

"It is better as it is, Dick—if anything that has so sad a termination can be well—yes, it is better as it is; you have fallen at my side, as it were. We will think or talk no more of this."

"We have been friends, and close friends, too, for a long period, Gervaise," returned Bluewater, stretching his arm from the bed, with the long, thin fingers of the hand extended to meet the other's grasp; "yet I cannot recall an act of yours which I can justly lay to heart, as unkind, or untrue."

"God forgive me, if you can—I hope not, Dick; most sincerely do I hope not. It would give me great pain to believe it."

"You have no cause for self-reproach. In no one act or thought can you justly accuse yourself with injuring me. I should die much happier if I could say the same of myself, Oakes!"

"Thought, Dick? Thought! You never meditated aught against me in your whole life. The love you bear me is the true reason why you lie there, at this blessed moment."

"It is grateful to find that I have been understood. I am deeply indebted to you, Oakes, for declining to signal me and my division down, when I foolishly requested that untimely forbearance. I was then suffering an anguish of mind to which any pain of the body I may now endure, is an elysium; your self-denial gave time——"

"For the heart to prompt you to that which your feelings yearned to do from the first, Bluewater," interrupted Sir Gervaise. "And, now, as your commanding officer, I enjoin silence on this subject forever."

"I will endeavor to obey. It will not be long, Oakes, that I shall remain under your orders," added the Rear-admiral, with a painful smile. "There should be no charge of mutiny against me in the last act of my life. You ought to forgive the one sin of omission when you remember how much and how completely my will has been subject to yours, during the last five-and-thirty years—how little my mind has matured a professional thought that yours has not originated!"

"Speak no more of 'forgive,' I charge you, Dick. That you have shown a girl-like docility in obeying my orders, too, is a truth I will aver before God and man; but when it comes to mind, I am far from asserting that mine has had the mastery. I do believe, could the truth be ascertained, it would be found that I am, at this blessed moment, enjoying a professional reputation, which is more than half due to you."

"It matters little now, Gervaise—it matters little, now. We were two light-hearted and gay lads, Oakes, when we first met as boys, fresh from school, and merry as health and spirits could make us."

"We were, indeed, Dick! yes, we were; thoughtless as if this sad moment were never to arrive."

"There were George Anson and Peter Warren, little Charley Saunders, Jack Byng, and a set of us that did, indeed, live as if we were never to die! We carried our lives, as it might be, in our hands, Oakes!"

"There is much of that, Dick, in boyhood and youth. But he is happiest, after all, who can meet this moment as you do—calmly and yet without any dependence on his own merits."

"I had an excellent mother, Oakes! Little do we think in youth, how much we

owe to the unextinguishable tenderness, and far-seeing lessons of our mothers! Ours both died while we were young, yet I do think we were their debtors for far more than we could ever repay."

Sir Gervaise simply assented, but making no immediate answer, otherwise, a long pause succeeded, during which the Vice-admiral fancied that his friend was beginning to doze. He was mistaken.

"You will be made Viscount Bowldero, for these last affairs, Gervaise," the wounded man unexpectedly observed, showing how much his thoughts were still engrossed with the interests of his friend. "Nor do I see why you should again refuse a peerage. Those who remain in this world may well yield to its usages and opinions, while they do not interfere with higher obligations."

"I!" exclaimed Sir Gervaise gloomily. "The thought of so commemorating what has happened would be worse than defeat to me! No, I ask no change of name to remind me constantly of my loss!"

Bluewater looked grateful, rather than pleased; but he made no answer. Now, he fell into a light slumber, from which he did not awake until the time he had himself set for the marriage of Wycherly and Mildred. With one uncle dead and still unburied, and another about to quit the world forever, a right that is usually deemed as joyous as it is solemn, might seem unseasonable; but the dying man had made it a request that he might have the consolation of knowing ere he expired, that he left his niece under the legal protection of one as competent as he was desirous of protecting her. The reader must imagine the arguments that were used for the occasion, but they were such as disposed all, in the end, to admit the propriety of yielding their ordinary prejudices to the exigencies of the moment.

It may be well to add, also, to prevent useless caviling, that the laws of England were not as rigid on the subject of the celebration of marriages in 1744, as they subsequently became; and that it was lawful then to perform the ceremony in a private house without a license and without the publishing of bans even; restrictions that were imposed a few years later. The penalty for dispensing with the publication of bans was a fine of £100, imposed on the clergyman; and this fine Bluewater chose to pay, rather than leave the only great object of life that now remained before him unaccomplished. This penalty in no degree impaired the validity of the contract, though Mrs. Dutton, as a woman, felt averse to parting with her beloved, without a rigid observance of all the customary forms. The point had finally been disposed of, by recourse to arguments addressed to the reason of this respectable woman, and by urging the necessity of the case. Her consent, however, was not given without a proviso, that a license should be subsequently procured, and a second marriage be had at a fitting moment, should the ecclesiastical authorities consent to the same; a most improbable thing in itself.

Mr. Rotherham availed himself of the statute inflicting the penalty, as an excuse for not officiating. His real motive, however, was understood, and the chaplain of the *Plantagenet*, a divine of character and piety, was substituted in his place. Bluewater had requested that as many of the captains of the fleet should be present as could be collected, and it was the assembling of these warriors of the deep, together with the arrival of the clergyman, that first gave notice of the approach of the appointed hour.

It is not our intention to dwell on the details in a ceremony that had so much that was painful in its solemnities. Neither Wycherly nor Mildred made any change in their attire, and the lovely bride wept from the time the service began, to the moment when she had left the arms of her uncle, to be received in those of her husband, and was supported from the room. All seemed sad, indeed, but Bluewater; to him the scene was exciting, but it brought great relief to his mind.

"I am now ready to die, gentlemen," he said, as the door closed on the new married couple. "My last worldly care is disposed of, and it were better for me to turn all my thoughts to another state

of being. My niece, Lady Wychecombe, will inherit the little I have to leave; nor do I know that it is of much importance to substantiate her birth, as her uncle clearly bestowed what would have been her mother's property, on her aunt, the duchess. If my dying declaration can be of any use, however, you hear it, and can testify to it. Now, come and take leave of me, one by one, that I may bless you all, and thank you for much undeserved, and, I fear, unrequited love."

The scene that followed was solemn and sad. One by one, the captains drew near the bed, and to each the dying man had something kind and affectionate to say. Even the most cold-hearted looked grave, and O'Neil, a man remarkable for a *gaite de cœur* that rendered the excitement of battle some of the pleasantest moments of his life, literally shed tears on the hand he kissed.

"Ah! my old friend," said the Rear-admiral, as Parker, of the *Carnatic*, drew near in his customary meek and subdued manner, "you perceive it is not years alone that bring us to our graves! They tell me you have behaved as usual in these late affairs; I trust that, after a long life of patient and arduous services, you are about to receive a proper reward."

"I will acknowledge, Admiral Bluewater," returned Parker, earnestly, "that it would be peculiarly grateful to receive some mark of the approbation of my sovereign; principally on account of my dear wife and children. We are not, like yourself, descended from a noble family; but must carve our rights to distinction, and they who have never known honors of this nature, prize them highly."

"Aye, my good Parker," interrupted the Rear-admiral, "and they who have ever known them, know their emptiness; most especially as they approach that verge of existence whence the eye looks in a near and fearful glance over the vast and unknown range of eternity."

"No doubt, sir; nor am I so vain as to suppose that hairs which have got to be gray as mine, can last forever. But, what I was about to say is, that precious as honors are to the humble, I would cheerfully yield every hope of the sort I have, to see you on the poop of the *Cæsar* again, with Mr. Cornet at your elbow, leading the fleet, or following the motions of the Vice-admiral."

"Thank you, my good Parker; that can never be; nor can I say, now, that I wish it might. When we have cast off from the world, there is less pleasure in looking back than in looking ahead. God bless you, Parker, and keep you, as you have ever been, an honest man."

Stowel was the last to approach the bed; nor did he do it until all had left the room but Sir Gervaise and himself. The indomitable good-nature, and the professional nonchalance of Bluewater, by leaving every subordinate undisturbed in the enjoyment of his own personal caprices, had rendered the Rear-admiral a greater favorite, in one sense at least, than the commander-in-chief. Stowel, by his near connection with Bluewater, had profited more by these peculiarities than any other officer under him, and the effect on his feelings had been in a very just proportion to the benefits. He could not refrain, it is true, from remembering the day when he himself had been a lieutenant in the ship in which the Rear-admiral had been a midshipman, but he no longer recollected the circumstance with the bitterness that it sometimes drew after it. On the contrary, it was now brought to his mind merely as the most distant of the many landmarks in their long and joint services.

"Well, Stowel," observed Bluewater, smiling sadly, "even the old *Cæsar* must be left behind. It is seldom a flag-captain has not some heart-burnings on account of his superior, and most sincerely I beg you to forget and forgive any I may have occasioned yourself."

"Heaven help me, sir! I was far, just then, from thinking of any such thing! I was fancying how little I should have thought it probable, when we were together in the *Calypso*, that I should ever be thus standing at your bedside. Really, Admiral Bluewater, I would rejoice to share with you the remnant of life that is left me."

"I do believe you would, Stowel; but that can never be. I have just performed my last act in this world, in giving my niece to Sir Wycherly Wychecombe."

"Yes, sir — yes, sir — marriage is no doubt honorable, as I often tell Mrs. Stowel, and therefore not to be despised; and yet it is singular that a gentleman who has lived a bachelor himself should fancy to see a marriage ceremony performed, and that, too, at the cost of £100, if any person choose to complain, just at the close of his own cruise! However, men are no more alike in such matters than women in their domestic qualities; and I sincerely hope this young Sir Wycherly may find as much comfort in the old house I understand he has a little inland here, as you and I have had together, sir, in the old *Cæsar*. I suppose there'll be no co-equals in Wychecombe Hall?"

"I trust not, Stowel. But you must now receive my last orders, as to the *Cæsar*——"

"The commander-in-chief has his own flag flying aboard of us, sir!" interrupted the methodical captain, in a sort of admonitory way.

"Never mind that, Stowel; I'll answer for his acquiescence. My body must be received on board and carried round in the ship to Plymouth. Place it on the main-deck, where the people can see the coffin; I would pass my last hours above ground, in their midst."

"It shall be done, sir—yes, sir, to the letter, Sir Gervaise not countermanding. And I'll write this evening to Mrs. Stowel to say she needn't come down, as usual, as soon as she hears the ship is in, but that she must wait until your flag is fairly struck."

"I should be sorry, Stowel, to cause a moment's delay in the meeting of husband and wife!"

"Don't name it, Admiral Bluewater; Mrs. Stowel will understand that it's duty; and when we married, I fully explained to her that duty, with a sailor, came before matrimony."

A little pause succeeded, then Bluewater took a final and affectionate leave of his captain. Some twenty minutes elapsed in profound silence, during whic Sir Gervaise did not stir, fancying tha his friend again dozed. But it was or dered that Bluewater was never to slee again, until he took the final rest of th dead. It was the mind, which had al ways blazed above the duller lethargy o his body, that buoyed him thus up, giving an unnatural impulse to his physical powers; an impulse, however, that was but momentary, and which, by means of the reaction, contributed in the end to his more speedy dissolution. Perceiving at length that his friend did not sleep, Sir Gervaise drew near his bed.

"Richard," he said, gently, "there is one without, who pines to be admitted. I have refused even his tears, under the impression that you felt disposed to sleep."

"Never less so. My mind appears to become brighter and clearer, instead of fading; I think I shall never sleep, in the sense you mean. Whoever the person is, let him be admitted."

Receiving this permission, Sir Gervaise opened the door, and Geoffrey Cleveland entered. At the same moment Galleygo, who came and went at pleasure, thrust in his own ungainly form. The boy's face betrayed the nature and the extent of his grief. In his mind, Admiral Bluewater was associated with all the events of his own professional life; and, though the period had in truth been so short, in his brief existence, the vista through which he looked back seemed quite as long as that which marked the friendship of the two Admirals themselves. Although he struggled manfully for self-control, feelings got the better of the lad, and he threw himself on his knees, at the side of the bed, sobbing as if his heart would break. Bluewater's eye glistened, and he laid a hand affectionately on the head of his young relative.

"Gervaise, you will take charge of this boy, when I'm gone," he said; "receive him in your own ship. I leave him to you as a near and very dear professional legacy. Cheer up—cheer up, my brave boy; look upon all this as a sailor's fortune. Our lives are the——"

"Kiss me, Oakes!" murmured the rear-admiral. In order to do this the commander-in-chief rose from his knees and bent over the body of his friend.—*The Two Admirals.*

The word "king's," which should have succeeded, seemed to choke the speaker. Casting a glance of meaning at his friend, with a painful smile on his face, he continued silent.

"Ah! dear sir," answered the midshipman ingenuously; "I knew that we might all be killed, but it never occurred to me that an Admiral could lose his life in battle. I'm sure—I'm sure you are the very first that has met with this accident!"

"Not by many, my poor Geoffrey. As there are but few admirals, few fall; but we are as much exposed as others."

"If I had only run that Monsieur des Prez through the body, when we closed with him," returned the boy, grating his teeth, and looking all the vengeance for which, at the passing instant, he felt the desire, "it would have been something! I might have done it, too, for he was quite unguarded!"

"It would have been a very bad thing, boy, to have injured a brave man, uselessly."

"Of what use was it to shoot you, sir? We took their ship, just the same as if you had not been hurt."

"I rather think, Geoffrey, their ship was virtually taken before I was wounded," returned Bluewater, smiling. "But I was shot by a French marine, who did no more than his duty."

"Yes, sir," exclaimed the boy, impatiently; "and he escaped without a scratch. He, at least, ought to have been massacred."

"Thou art bloody-minded, child; I scarce know thee. Massacred is not a word for either a British nobleman or a British sailor. I saved the life of that marine; and, when you come to lie, like me, on your death-bed, Geoffrey, you will learn how sweet a consolation can be derived from the consciousness of such an act; we all need mercy, and none ought to expect it, for themselves, who do not yield it to others."

The boy was rebuked, and his feelings took a better, though scarcely a more natural direction. Bluewater now spoke to him of his newly-discovered cousin, and had a melancholy satisfaction in creating an interest in behalf of Mildred, in the breast of the noble-hearted and ingenuous boy. The latter listened with respectful attention, as had been his wont, until, deceived by the tranquil and benevolent manner of Bluewater, he permitted himself to fall into the natural delusion of believing the wound of the Rear-admiral less serious than he had supposed, and to begin to entertain hopes that the wounded man might yet survive. Calmed by these feelings, he soon ceased to weep; and, promising discretion, was permitted by Sir Gervaise to remain in the room, where he busied himself in the offices of a nurse.

Another long pause succeeded this exciting little scene, during which Bluewater lay quietly communing with himself and his God. Sir Gervaise wrote orders, and read reports, though his eye was never off the countenance of his friend more than a minute or two at a time. At length, the Rear-admiral aroused himself again, and began to take an interest once more in the persons and things around him.

"Galleygo, my old fellow-cruiser," he said, "I leave Sir Gervaise more particularly to your care. As we advance in life, our friends decrease in numbers; it is only those that have been well tried that we can rely on."

"Yes, Admiral Blue, I know that, and so does Sir Jarvy. Yes, old shipmates afore young 'uns, any day, and old sailors, too, afore green hands. Sir Jarvy's Bowlderos are good plate-holders, and the likes of that; but when it comes to heavy weather and a hard strain, I thinks but little on 'em, all put together."

"By the way, Oakes," said Bluewater, with a sudden interest in such a subject that he never expected to feel again, "I have heard nothing of the first day's work, in which, through the little I have gleaned by listening to those around me, I understand you took a two-decker, besides dismasting the French admiral?"

"Pardon me, Dick; you had better try and catch a little sleep; the subject of those days' work is really painful to me."

"Well, then, Sir Jarvy, if you have an aversion to telling the story to Admiral Blue, I can do it, your honor," put in Gal-

leygo, who gloried in giving a graphic description of a sea-fight. "I thinks, now, a history of that day will comfort a flag-hofficer as has been so badly wounded himself."

Bluewater offering no opposition, Galleygo proceeded with his account of the evolutions of the ships, as we have already described them, succeeding surprisingly well in rendering the narrative interesting, and making himself perfectly intelligible and clear, by his thorough knowledge and ready use of the necessary nautical terms.

When he came to the moment in which the English line separated, part passing to windward, and part to leeward of the two French ships, he related the incident in so clear and spirited a manner, that the commander-in-chief himself dropped his pen and sat listening with pleasure.

"Who could imagine, Dick," Sir Gervaise observed, "that those fellows in the tops watch us so closely, and could give so accurate an account of what passes!"

"Ah, Gervaise, and what is the vigilance of Galleygo to that of the All-seeing eye! It is a terrible thought, at an hour like this, to remember that nothing can be forgotten. I have somewhere read that not an oath is uttered that does not continue to vibrate through all time, in the wide-spreading currents of sound—not a prayer lisped, that its record is not also to be found stamped on the laws of Nature by the indelible seal of the Almighty's will!"

There was little in common between the religious impressions of the two friends. They were both sailors, and though the word does not necessarily imply that they were sinners in an unusual degree, neither does it rigidly imply that they were saints. Each had received the usual elementary education, and then each had been turned adrift, as it might be, on the ocean of life, to suffer the seed to take root, and the fruit to ripen as best they might. Few of those "who go down to the great deep in ships," and who escape the more brutalizing effects of lives so rude, are altogether without religious impressions. Living so much, as it were, in the immediate presence of the power of God, the sailor is much disposed to reverence his omnipotence, even while he transgresses his laws; but in nearly all those instances in which Nature has implanted a temperament inclining to deep feeling, as was the case with Bluewater, not even the harsh examples, nor the loose or irresponsible lives of men thus separated from the customary ties of society, can wholly extinguish the reverence for God which is created by constantly dwelling in the presence of his earthly magnificence. This sentiment in Bluewater had not been altogether without fruits, for he both read and reflected much. Sometimes, though at isolated and distant intervals, he even prayed; and that fervently, and with a strong and full sense of his own demerits. As a consequence of this general disposition, and of the passing convictions, his mind was better attuned for the crisis before him, than would have been the case with most of his brethren in arms, who, when overtaken with the fate so common to the profession, are usually left to sustain their last moments with the lingering enthusiasm of strife and victory.

On the other hand, Sir Gervaise was as simple as a child in matters of this sort. He had a reverence for his Creator, and such general notions of his goodness and love, as the well-disposed are apt to feel; but all the dogmas concerning the lost condition of the human race, the mediation, and the power of faith, floated in his mind as opinions not to be controverted, and yet as scarcely to be felt. In short, the commander-in-chief admitted the practical heresy, which overshadows the faith of millions, while he deemed himself to be a stout advocate of church and king. Still, Sir Gervaise Oakes, on occasions, was more than usually disposed to seriousness, and was even inclined to be devout; but it was without much regard to theories or revelation. At such moments, while his opinions would not properly admit him within the pale of any Christian church, in particular, his feelings might have identified him with all. In a word, we apprehend he was a tolerably

fair example of what vague generalities, when acting on a temperament not indisposed to moral impressions, render the great majority of men; who flit around the mysteries of a future state, without alighting either on the consolations of faith, or discovering any of those logical conclusions which, half the time unconsciously to themselves, they seem to expect. When Bluewater made his last remark, therefore, the Vice-admiral looked anxiously at his friend; and religion, for the first time since the other received his hurt, mingled with his reflections. He had devoutly, though mentally, returned thanks to God for his victory, but it had never occurred to him that Bluewater might need some preparation for death.

"Would you like to see the *Plantagenet's* chaplain again, Dick?" he said, tenderly; "you are no Papist; of that I am certain."

"In that you are quite right, Gervaise. I consider all churches—the one only holy Catholic church, if you will—as but a means furnished by divine benevolence to aid weak men in their pilgrimage; but I also believe that there is even a shorter way to His forgiveness than through these common avenues. How far I am right," he added, smiling, "none will know better than myself a few hours hence."

"Friends must meet again, hereafter, Bluewater; it is irrational to suppose that they who have loved each other so well in this state of being, are to be forever separated in the other."

"We will hope so, Oakes," taking the Vice-admiral's hand; "we will hope so. Still, there can be no ships for us—no cruisers—no victories—no triumphs! It is only at moments like this, at which I have arrived, that we come to view these things in their proper light. Of all the past, your constant, unwavering friendship gives me the most pleasure!"

The Vice-admiral could resist no longer. He turned aside and wept. This tribute to nature, in one so manly, was imposing, even to the dying man, and Galleygo regarded it with awe. Familiar as the latter had become with his master, by use and indulgence, no living being, in his estimation, was as authoritative or as formidable as the commander-in-chief; and the effect of the present spectacle was to induce him to hide his own face in self-abasement. Bluewater saw it all, but he neither spoke nor gave any token of his observation. He merely prayed, and that right fervently, not only for his friend, but for his humble and uncouth follower.

A reaction took place in the system of the wounded man, about nine o'clock that night. At this time he believed himself near his end, and he sent for Wycherly and his niece, to take his leave of them. Mrs. Dutton was also present, as was Magrath, who remained on shore, in attendance. Mildred lay for half an hour bathing her uncle's pillow with her tears, until she was removed at the surgeon's suggestion.

"Ye'll see, Sir Gervaise," he whispered—or "Sir Jairvis," as he always pronounced the name—"ye'll see, Sir Jairvis, that it's the duty of the faculty to prolong life, even when there's no hope of saving it; and if ye'll be regairding the judgment of a professional man, Lady Wychecombe had better withdraw. It would really be a matter of honest exultation for us Plantagenets to get the Rear-admiral through the night, seeing that the surgeon of the *Cæsar* said he could not survive the setting sun."

At the moment of final separation Bluewater had little to say to his niece. He kissed and blessed her again and again, and then signed that she should be taken away. Mrs. Dutton also came in for a full share of his notice, he having desired her to remain after Wycherly and Mildred had quitted the room.

"To your care and affection, excellent woman," he said, in a voice that had now sunk nearly to a whisper, "we owe it that Mildred is not unfit for her station. Her recovery would have been even more painful than her loss, had she been restored to her proper family, uneducated, vulgar, and coarse."

"That could hardly have happened to Mildred, sir, in any circumstance," answered the weeping woman. "Nature

has done too much for the dear child, to render her anything but delicate and lovely under any tolerable circumstances of depression."

"She is better as she is, and God be thanked that he raised up such a protector for her childhood. You have been all in all to her in her infancy, and she will strive to repay it to your age."

Of this Mrs. Dutton felt too confident to need assurances; and receiving the dying man's blessing, she knelt at his bedside, prayed fervently for a few minutes, and withdrew. After this, nothing out of the ordinary track occurred until past midnight, and Magrath, more than once, whispered his joyful anticipations that the Rear-admiral would survive until morning.

An hour before day, however, the wounded man revived, in a way that the surgeon distrusted. He knew that no physical change of this sort could well happen that did not arise from the momentary ascendency of mind over matter, as the spirit is on the point of finally abandoning its earthly tenement; a circumstance of no unusual occurrence in patients of strong and active intellectual properties, whose faculties often brighten for an instant, in their last moments, as the lamp flashes and glares as it is about to become extinct. Going to the bed, he examined his patient attentively, and was satisfied that the final moment was near.

"You're a man and a soldier, Sir Jairvis," he said, in a low voice, "and it'll no be doing good to attempt misleading your judgment in a case of this sort. Our respectable friend, the Rear-admiral, is *articulo mortis*, as one might almost say; he cannot possibly survive half an hour."

Sir Gervaise started. He looked around him a little wistfully; for, at that moment, he would have given much to be alone with his dying friend. But he hesitated to make a request, which, it struck him, might seem improper. From this embarrassment, however, he was relieved by Bluewater, himself, who had the same desire, without the same scruples about confessing it. He drew the surgeon to his side, and whispered a wish to be left alone with the commander-in-chief.

"Well, there will be no trespass on the rules of practice in indulging the poor man in his desire," muttered Magrath, as he looked about him to gather the last of his professional instruments, like the workman who is about to quit one place of toil to repair to another; "and I'll just be indulging him."

So saying, he pushed Galleygo and Geoffrey from the room, before him, left it himself, and closed the door.

Finding himself alone, Sir Gervaise knelt at the side of the bed and prayed, holding the hand of his friend in both of his own. The example of Mrs. Dutton, and the yearnings of his own heart, exacted this sacrifice; when it was over he felt a great relief from sensations that nearly choked him.

"Do you forgive me, Gervaise?" whispered Bluewater.

"Name it not—name it not, my best friend. We all have our moments of weakness, and our need of pardon. May God forget all my sins as freely as I forget your errors!"

"God bless you, Oakes, and keep you the same simple-minded, true-hearted man you have ever been."

Sir Gervaise buried his face in the bedclothes, and groaned.

"Kiss me, Oakes," murmured the Rear-admiral.

In order to do this, the commander-in-chief rose from his knees and bent over the body of his friend. As he raised himself from the cheek he had saluted, a benignant smile gleamed on the face of the dying man, and he ceased to breathe. Near half a minute followed, however, before the last and most significant breath that is ever drawn from man, was given. The remainder of that night Sir Gervaise Oakes passed in the chamber alone, pacing the floor, recalling the many scenes of pleasure, danger, pain, and triumph, through which he and the dead had passed in company. With the return of light, he summoned the attendants, and retired to his tent.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"And they came for the buried king that lay
At rest in that ancient fane;
For he must be armed on the battle day,
With them to deliver Spain!—
Then the march went sounding on,
And the Moors by noontide sun,
Were dust on Tolosa's plains."

—MRS. HEMANS.

IT remains only to give a rapid sketch of the fortunes of our principal characters, and of the few incidents that are more immediately connected with what has gone before. The death of Bluewater was announced to the fleet, at sunrise, by hauling down his flag from the mizzen of the *Cæsar*. The Vice-admiral's flag came down with it, and reappeared at the next minute at the fore of the *Plantagenet*. But the little white emblem of rank never went aloft again in honor of the deceased. At noon, it was spread over his coffin, on the main deck of the ship, agreeably to his own request; and more than once that day did some rough old tar use it, to wipe the tear from his eyes.

In the afternoon of the day after the death of one of our heroes, the wind came round to the westward, and all the vessels lifted their anchors and proceeded to Plymouth. The crippled ships, by this time, were in a state to carry more or less sail, and a stranger who had seen the melancholy-looking line, as it rounded the Start, would have fancied it a beaten fleet on its return to port. The only sign of exultation that appeared were the jacks that were flying over the white flags of the prizes; and even when all had anchored, the same air of sadness reigned among these victorious mariners. The body was landed with the usual forms; but the procession of warriors of the deep that followed it, was distinguished by the gravity that exceeded the ordinary aspects of mere form. Many of the captains, and Greenly in particular, had viewed the maneuvering of Bluewater with surprise, and the latter not altogether without displeasure; but his consequent conduct completely erased these impressions, leaving no other recollection connected with his conduct that morning than the brilliant courage and admirable handling of his vessels, by which the fortunes of a nearly desperate day were retrieved. Those who did reflect any longer on the subject, attributed the singularity of the course pursued by the Rear-admiral to some private orders communicated in the telegraphic signal, as already mentioned.

It is unnecessary for us to dwell on the particular movements of the fleet after it reached Plymouth. The ships were repaired, the prizes received into the service, and, in due time, all took the sea again, ready and anxious to encounter their country's enemies. They ran the careers usual to English heavy cruisers in that age; and, as ships form character in this work, perhaps it may not be amiss to take a general glance at their several fortunes, together with those of their respective commanders. Sir Gervaise fairly wore out the *Plantagenet*, which vessel was broken up three years later, though not until she had carried a blue flag at her main more than two years. Greenly lived to be a Rear-admiral of the red, and died of yellow fever in the island of Barbadoes. The *Cæsar*, with Stowel still in command of her, foundered at sea in a winter's cruise in the Baltic, every soul perishing. This calamity occurred the winter succeeding the summer of our legend, and the only relieving circumstances connected with the disaster, was the fact that her commander got rid of Mrs. Stowel altogether from that day forward. The *Thunderer* had her share in many a subsequent battle, and Foley, her captain, died a Rear-admiral of England, and Vice-admiral of the red, thirty years later. The *Carnatic* was commanded by Parker, until the latter got a right to hoist a blue flag at the mizzen; which was done for just one day to comply with form, when both ship and admiral were laid aside as too old for further use. It should be added, however, that Parker was knighted by the king on board his own ship; a circumstance that cast a halo of sunshine over the close of the life of one, who had commenced his career so humbly as to render this happy close more than equal to his expectations.

In direct opposition to this, it may be

said here, that Sir Gervaise refused, for the third time, to be made Viscount Bowldero, with a feeling just the reverse of Parker's; for, secure of his social position, and careless of politics, he viewed the elevation with an indifference that was a natural consequence enough of his own birth, fortune, and high character. On this occasion—it was after another victory—George II. personally alluded to the subject, remarking that the success we have recorded had never met with its reward; when the old seaman let out the true secret of his pertinaciously declining an honor, about which he might otherwise have been supposed to be as indifferent to the acceptance, as to the refusal. "Sire," he answered to the remark of the king, "I am duly sensible of your Majesty's favor; but, I can never consent to receive a patent of nobility that, in my eyes, will always seem to be sealed with the blood of my closest and best friend." This reply was remembered, and the subject was never adverted to again.

The fate of the *Blenheim* was one of those impressive blanks that dot the pages of nautical history. She sailed for the Mediterranean alone, and after she had discharged her pilot, was never heard of again. This did not occur, however, until Captain Sterling had been killed on her decks, in one of Sir Gervaise's subsequent actions. The *Achilles* was suffered to drift in too near to some heavy French batteries, before the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed; and after every stick had been cut out of her, she was compelled to lower her flag. His earldom and his courage saved Lord Morganic from censure; but, being permitted to go up to Paris, previously to his exchange, he contracted a matrimonial engagement with a celebrated *danseuse*, a craft that gave him so much future employment, that he virtually abandoned his profession. Nevertheless, his name was on the list of vice-admirals of the blue, when he departed this life. The *Warspite* and Captain Goodfellow both died natural deaths; one as a receiving-ship, and the other as a Rear-admiral of the white. The *Dover*, Captain Drinkwater, was lost in attempting to weather Sicily in a gale, when her commander, and quite half of her crew, were drowned.

The *York* did many a hard day's duty before her time arrived; but, in the end, she was so much injured in a general action as to be abandoned and set fire to, at sea. Her commander was lost overboard, in the very first cruise she took, after that related in this work. The *Elizabeth* rotted as a guard-ship, in the Medway; and Captain Blakely retired from the service with one arm, a yellow-admiral. The *Dublin* laid her bones in the cove of Cork, having been condemned after a severe winter on the north coast. Captain O'Neil was killed in a duel with a French officer, after the peace; the latter having stated that his ship had run away from two frigates commanded by the Chevalier. The *Chloe* was taken by an enemy's fleet, in the next war; but Captain Denham worked his way up to a white flag at the main, and a peerage. The *Druid* was wrecked that very summer, chasing inshore, near Bordeaux; and Blewet, in a professional point of view, never regained the ground he lost, on this occasion. As for the sloops and cutters, they went the way of all small cruisers, while their nameless commanders shared the usual fate of mariners.

Wycherly remained at Wychecombe until the interment of his uncle took place; at which, aided by Sir Reginald's influence and knowledge, and, in spite of Tom's intrigues, he appeared as chief mourner. The affair of the succession was also so managed as to give him very little trouble. Tom, discovering that his own illegitimacy was known, and seeing the hopelessness of the contest against such an antagonist as Sir Reginald, who knew quite as much of the facts as he did of the law of the case, was fain to retire from the field. From that moment, no one heard anything more of the legacies. In the end he received the £20,000 in five per cents, and the few chattels Sir Wycherly had a right to give away; but his enjoyment of them was short, as he contracted a severe cold that very autumn, and died of a malignant fever, in a few weeks.

Leaving no will, his property escheated; but it was all restored to his two uterine brothers by the liberality of the ministry and out of respect to the long services of the baron, which two brothers, it will be remembered, alone had any of the blood of Wychecombe in their veins to boast of. This was disposing of the savings of both the baronet and the judge, with a very suitable regard to moral justice.

Wycherly also appeared, though it was in company with Sir Gervaise Oakes, as one of the principal mourners at the funeral obsequies of Admiral Bluewater. These were of a public character, and took place in Westminster Abbey. The carriages of that portion of the royal personages who were not restrained by the laws of court etiquette, appeared in the procession; and several members of that very family that the deceased regarded as intruders, were present incog. at his last rites. This, however, was but one of the many illusions that the great masquerade of life is constantly offering to the public gaze.

There was little difficulty in establishing the claims of Mildred to be considered the daughter of Colonel Bluewater and Agnes Hedworth. Lord Bluewater was soon satisfied; and, as he was quite indifferent to the possession of his kinsman's money, an acquisition he neither wished nor expected, the most perfect good-will existed between the parties. There was more difficulty with the Duchess of Glamorgan, who had acquired too many of the notions of very high rank to look with complacency on a niece that had been educated as the daughter of a sailing-master in the navy. She raised many objections, while she admitted that she had been the confidant of her sister's attachment to John Bluewater. Her second son, Geoffrey, did more to remove her scruples than all the rest united; and when Sir Gervaise Oakes in person condescended to make a journey to the Park, to persuade her to examine the proofs, she could not well decline. As soon as one of her really candid mind entered into the inquiry, the evidence was found to be irresistible, and she at once yielded to the feelings of nature. Wycherly had been indefatigable in establishing his wife's claims—more so, indeed, than in establishing his own; and, at the suggestion of the Vice-admiral—or admiral of the white, as he had become by a recent general promotion—he consented to accompany the latter in this visit, waiting at the nearest town, however, for a summons to the Park, as soon as it could be ascertained that his presence would be agreeable to its mistress.

"If my niece proves but half as acceptable in appearance as my *nephew*, Sir Gervaise," observed the duchess, when the young Virginian was introduced to her, and laying stress on the word we have italicized, "nothing can be wanting to the agreeables of this new connection. I am impatient, now, to see my niece; Sir Wycherly Wychecombe has prepared me to expect a young woman of more than common merit."

"My life on it, duchess, he has not raised your expectations too high. The poor girl is still dwelling in her cottage, the companion of her reputed mother; but it is time, Wychecombe, that you had claimed your bride."

"I expect to find her and Mrs. Dutton at the Hall, on my return, Sir Gervaise; it having been thus arranged between us. The sad ceremonies through which we have lately been, were unsuited to the introduction of the new mistress to her abode, and the last had been deferred to a more fitting occasion."

"Let the first visit that Lady Wychecombe pays, be to this place," said the duchess. "I do not command it, Sir Wycherly, as one who has some slight claims to her duty; but I solicit it, as one who wishes to possess every hold upon her love. Her mother was an only sister; and an only sister's child must be very dear to one."

It would have been impossible for the Duchess of Glamorgan to have said as much as this before she saw the young Virginian; but, now he had turned out a person so very different from what she expected, she had lively hopes in behalf of her niece.

Wycherly returned to Wychecombe,

after this short visit to Mildred's aunt, and found his lovely bride in quiet possession, accompanied by her mother. Dutton still remained at the station, for he had the sagacity to see that he might not be welcome, and modesty enough to act with a cautious reserve.

But Wycherly respected his excellent wife too profoundly not to have a due regard to her feelings, in all things; and the master was invited to join the party. Brutality and meanness united, like those which belonged to the character of Dutton, are not easily abashed, and he accepted the invitation, in the hope, that, after all, he was to reap as many advantages by the marriage of Mildred with the affluent baronet as if she had actually been his daughter.

After passing a few weeks in sober happiness at home, Wycherly felt it due to all parties to carry his wife to the Park, in order that she might make the acquaintance of the near relatives who dwelt there. Mrs. Dutton, by invitation, was one of the party; but Dutton was left behind, having no necessary connection with the scenes and feelings that were likely to occur. It would be painting the duchess too much *en beau*, were we to say that she met Mildred without certain misgivings and fears. But the first glimpse of her lovely niece completely put natural feelings in the ascendency. The resemblance to her sister was so strong as to cause a piercing cry to escape her, and, bursting into tears, she folded the trembling young woman to her heart, with a fervor and sincerity that set at naught all conventional manners. This was the commencement of a close intimacy; which lasted but a short time, however, the duchess dying two years later.

Wycherly continued in the service until the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, when he finally quitted the sea. His strong native attachments led him back to Virginia, where all his own nearest relatives belonged, and where his whole heart might be said to be when he saw Mildred and his children at his side. With him, early associations and habits had more strength than traditions and memorials of the past. He erected a spacious dwelling on the estate inherited from his father, where he passed most of his time; consigning Wychecombe to the care of a careful steward. With the additions and improvements that he was now enabled to make, his Virginian estate produced even a larger income than the English, and his interests really pointed to the choice he had made. But no pecuniary considerations lay at the bottom of his selection. He really preferred the graceful and courteous ease of the intercourse which characterized the manners of the James River. In that age, they were equally removed from the coarse and boisterous jollity of the English country-squire, and the heartless conventionalities of high life. In addition to this, his sensitive feelings rightly enough detected that he was regarded in the mother-country as a sort of intruder. He was spoken of, alluded to in the journals, and viewed even by his tenants as the *American* landlord: and he never felt truly at home in the country for which he had fought and bled.

In England his rank as a baronet was not sufficient to look down these little peculiarities; whereas, in Virginia, it gave him a certain *éclat*, that was grateful to one of the main weaknesses of human nature. "At home," as the mother-country was then affectionately termed, he had no hope of becoming a privy councillor; while, in his native colony, his rank and fortune, almost as a

matter of course, placed him in the council of the governor. In a word, while Wycherly found most of those worldly considerations which influence men in the choice of their place of residence in favor of the region in which he happened to be born, his election was made more from feeling and taste than from anything else. His mind had taken an early bias in favor of the usages and opinions of the people among whom he had received his first impressions, and this bias he retained to the hour of his death.

Like a true woman, Mildred found her happiness with her husband and children. Of the latter she had but three; a boy and two girls. The care of the last was early committed to Mrs. Dutton. This excellent woman had remained at Wychecombe with her husband, until death put an end to his vices, though the close of his career was exempt from those scenes of brutal dictation and interference that had rendered the earlier part of her life so miserable. Apprehension of what might be the consequences to himself, acted as a check, and he had sagacity enough to see that the physical comforts he now possessed were all owing to the influence of his wife. He lived but four years, however. On his death, his widow immediately took her departure for America.

It would be substituting pure images of the fancy for a picture of sober realities, were we to say that Lady Wychecombe and her adopted mother never regretted the land of their birth. This negation of feeling, habits, and prejudices is not to be expected even in an Esquimaux. They both had occasional strictures to make on the climate (and this to Wycherly's great surprise, for he conscientiously believed that of England to be just the worst in the world), on the fruits, the servants, the roads, and the difficulty of procuring various little comforts. But, as this was said good-naturedly and in pleasantry, rather than in the way of complaint, it led to no unpleasant scenes or feelings.

As all three made occasional voyages to England, where his estates and more particularly settlements with his factor, compelled the baronet to go once in about a lustrum, the fruits and the climate were finally given up by the ladies. After many years, even the slip-shod, careless, but hearty attendance of the negroes came to be preferred to the dogged mannerism of the English domestics, perfect as were the latter in their parts; and the whole subject got to be one of amusement instead of one of complaint. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that the traveler who passes once through a country, with his home-bred, and quite likely provincial notions thick upon him, is competent to describe, with due discrimination, even the usages of which he is actually a witness. This truth all the family came in time to discover; and while it rendered them more strictly critical in their remarks, it also rendered them more tolerant. As it was, few happier families were to be found in the British empire than that of Sir Wycherly Wychecombe; its head retaining his manly and protecting affection for all dependent on him, while his wife, beautiful as a matron, as she had been lovely as a girl, clung to him with the tenacity of the vine to its own oak.

Of the result of the rising in the North it is unnecessary to say much. The history of the Chevalier's successes in the first year, and of his final overthrow at Culloden, is well known. Sir Reginald Wychecombe, like hundreds of others, played his cards so skillfully that he avoided committing himself; and, although he lived and eventually died a

suspected man, he escaped forfeitures and attainder. With Sir Wycherly, as the head of his house, he maintained a friendly correspondence to the last, even taking charge of the paternal estate in its owner's absence; manifesting to the hour of his death, a scrupulous probity in matters of money, mingled with an inherent love of management and intrigue, in things that related to politics and the succession. Sir Reginald lived long enough to see the hopes of the Jacobites completely extinguished, and the throne filled by a native Englishman.

Many long years after the events which rendered the week of its opening incidents so memorable among its actors, must now be imagined. Time had advanced with its usual unfaltering tread, and the greater part of a generation had been gathered to their fathers. George III. had been on the throne not less than three lustrums, and most of the important actors of the period of '45, were dead—many of them, in a degree, forgotten. But each age has its own events and its own changes. Those colonies, which in 1745 were so loyal, so devoted to the house of Hanover, in the belief that political and religious liberty depended on the issue, had revolted against the supremacy of the Parliament of the empire.

America was already in arms against the mother country, and the very day before the occurrence of the little scene we are about to relate, the intelligence of the battle of Bunker Hill had reached London. Although the gazette and national pride had, in a degree, lessened the characteristics of this most remarkable of all similar combats, by exaggerating the numbers of the colonists engaged, and lessening the loss of the royal troops, the impression produced by the news is said to have been greater than any known to that age. It had been the prevalent opinion of England —an opinion that was then general in Europe, and which descended even to our own times—that the animals of the new Continent, man included, had less courage and physical force than those of the old; and astonishment mingled with the forebodings of the intelligent, when it was found that a body of ill-armed countrymen had dared to meet, in a singularly bloody combat, twice their number of regular troops, and that, too, under the guns of the king's shipping and batteries. Rumors, for the moment, were rife in London, and the political world was filled with gloomy anticipations of the future.

In the morning of the day alluded to, Westminster Abbey, as usual, was open to the inspection of the curious and interested. Several parties were scattered among its aisles and chapels, some reading the inscriptions on the simple tablets of the dead which illustrate a nation in illustrating themselves; others listening to the names of princes who derived their consequence from their thrones and alliances; and still other sets, who were wandering among the more elaborate memorials that have been raised equally to illustrate insignificance, and to mark the final resting places of more modern heroes and statesmen. The beauty of the weather had brought out more visitors than common, and not less than half a dozen equipages were in waiting, in and about Palace Yard. Among others, one had a ducal coronet. This carriage did not fail to attract the attention that is more than usually bestowed on rank, in England. All were empty, however, and more than one party of pedestrians entered the venerable edifice, rejoicing that the view of a duke or a duchess was to be thrown in, among the other sights gratuitously.

All who passed on foot, however, were not influenced by this vulgar feeling; for one group went by, that did not even cast a glance at the collection of carriages; the seniors of the party being too much accustomed to such things to lend them a thought, and the juniors too full of anticipations of what they were about to see, to think of other matters. This party consisted of a handsome man of fifty-odd, and a lady some three or four years his junior, well preserved and still exceedingly attractive; a young man of twenty-six, and two lovely girls, that looked like twins, though one was really twenty-one, and the other but nineteen. These were Sir Wycherly and Lady Wychecombe, Wycherly, their only son, then just returned from a five years' peregrination on the continent of Europe, and Mildred and Agnes, their daughters. The rest of the family had arrived in England about a fortnight before, to greet their heir on his return from the grand tour, as it was then termed. The meeting had been one of love, though Lady Wychecombe had to reprove a few innocent foreign affectations, as she fancied them to be, in her son; and the baronet, himself, laughed at the scraps of French, Italian, and German, that quite naturally mingled in the young man's discourse. All this, however, cast no cloud over the party, for it had ever been a family of entire confidence and unbroken love.

"This is a most solemn place to me," observed Sir Wycherly, as they entered the Poet's Corner, "and one in which a common man unavoidably feels his own insignificance. But we will first make our pilgrimage, and look at these remarkable inscriptions as we come out. The tomb we seek is in a chapel on the other side of the church, near to the great doors. When I last saw it, it was quite alone."

On hearing this, the whole party moved on; though the two lovely young Virginians cast wistful and curious eyes behind them, at the wonders by which they were surrounded.

"Is not this an extraordinary edifice, Wycherly?" half whispered Agnes, the youngest of the sisters, as she clung to one arm of her brother, Mildred occupying the other. "Can the whole world furnish such another?"

"So much for hominy and James River?" answered the young man, laughing; "now could you but see the pile at Rouen, or that at Rheims, or that at Antwerp, or even that at York, in this good kingdom, old Westminster would have to fall back upon its little tablets and big names. But Sir Wycherly stops; he must see what he calls his landfall."

Sir Wycherly had indeed stopped. It was in consequence of having reached the head of the *chœur*, whence he could see the interior of the recess, or chapel, toward which he had been moving. It still contained but a single monument, and that was adorned with an anchor and other nautical emblems.

Even at that distance, the words, "RICHARD BLUEWATER, REAR-ADMIRAL OF THE WHITE," might be read. But the baronet had come to a sudden halt, in consequence of seeing a party of three enter the chapel, in which he wished to be alone with his own family. The party consisted of an old man, who walked with tottering steps, and this so much the more from the circumstance that he leaned on a domestic nearly as old as himself, though of a somewhat sturdier frame, and of a tall imposing-looking person of middle age, who followed the two with patient steps. Several attendants of the cathedral watched this party from a dis-

tance with an air of curiosity and respect; but they had been requested not to accompany it to the chapel.

"They must be some old brother officers of my poor uncle, visiting his tomb!" whispered Lady Wychecombe. "The very venerable gentleman has naval emblems about his attire."

"Do you—can you forget him, love? 'Tis Sir Gervaise Oakes, the pride of England: yet how changed! It is now five-and-twenty years since we last met; still I knew him at a glance. The servant is old Galleygo, his steward; but the gentleman with him is a stranger. Let us advance; we cannot be intruders in such a place."

Sir Gervaise paid no attention to the entrance of the Wychecombes. It was evident by the vacant look of his countenance, that time and hard service had impaired faculties, though his body remained entire; an unusual thing for one who had been so often engaged. Still there were glimmerings of lively recollections, and even of strong sensibilities about his eyes as sudden fancies crossed his mind. Once a year, the anniversary of his friend's interment, he visited that chapel; and he had now been brought here as much from habit, as by his own desire. A chair was provided for him, and he sat facing the tomb, with the large letters before his eyes. He regarded neither, though he bowed courteously to the salute of the strangers. His companion at first seemed a little surprised, if not offended at the intrusion; but when Wycherly mentioned that they were relatives of the deceased, he also bowed complacently, and made way for the ladies.

"This it is as what you wants to see, Sir Jarvy," observed Galleygo, jogging his master's shoulder by way of jogging his memory. "Them 'ere cables and hanchors, and that 'ere mizzen-mast, with a Rear-admiral's flag a-flying, is rigged in this old church, in honor of our friend, Admiral Blue, as was; but as is now dead and gone this many a long year."

"Admiral of the blue!" repeated Sir Gervaise coldly. "You're mistaken, Galleygo; I'm an Admiral of the white, and Admiral of the fleet in the bargain. I know my own rank, sir."

"I know that as well as you does yourself, Sir Jarvy," answered Galleygo, whose grammar had rather become confirmed than improved, by time, "or as well as the First Lord himself. But Admiral Blue was once our best friend, and I doesn't at all admire at your forgetting him—one of these long nights you'll be forgetting *me*."

"I beg your pardon, Galleygo; I rather think not. I remember *you* when a very young man."

"Well, and so you mought remember Admiral Blue, if you'd just try. I knowed ye both when young luffs, myself."

"This is a painful scene," observed the stranger to Sir Wycherly, with a melancholy smile. "This gentleman is now at the tomb of his dearest friend; and yet, as you see, he appears to have lost all recollection that such a person ever existed. For what do we live, if a few brief years are to render our memories such vacant spots!"

"Has he been long this way?" asked Lady Wychecombe, with interest.

The stranger started at the sound of her voice. He looked intently into the face of the still fair speaker, before he answered; then he bowed, and replied:

"He has been failing these five years, though his last visit here was much less painful than this. But are our own memories perfect? Surely, I have seen

that face before! These young ladies, too——"

"Geoffrey—dear Cousin Geoffrey!" exclaimed Lady Wychecombe, holding out both hands. "It is—it must be the Duke of Glamorgan, Wycherly!"

No further explanations were needed. All the parties recognized each other in an instant. They had not met for many, many years, and each had passed the period of life when the greatest change occurs in the physical appearance; but, now that the ice was broken, a flood of recollections poured in. The duke, or Geoffrey Cleveland, as we prefer to call him, kissed his cousin and her daughters with frank affection, for no change of condition had altered his simple sea-habits, and he shook hands with the gentlemen with a cordiality like that of old times. All this, however, was unheeded by Sir Gervaise, who sat looking at the monument, in a dull apathy.

"Galleygo," he said; but Galleygo had placed himself before Sir Wycherly, and thrust out a hand that looked like a bunch of knuckles.

"I knows ye!" exclaimed the steward with a grin. "I knowed ye in the offing yonder, but I couldn't make out the number. Lord, sir, if this doesn't brighten Sir Jarvy up again, and put him in mind of old times, I shall begin to think we have run out cable to the better end."

"I will speak to him, duke, if you think it advisable?" said Sir Wycherly, in an inquiring manner.

"Galleygo," put in Sir Gervaise, "what lubber fitted that cable? He has turned in the clench the wrong way."

"Aye, aye, sir, they *is* great lubbers, them stone-cutters, Sir Jarvy; and they knows about as much of ships, as ships knows of them. But here is young Sir Wycherly Wychecombe come to see you—the old 'un's nevy."

"Sir Wycherly, you are a very welcome guest. Bowldero is a poor place for a gentleman of your merit; but such as it is, it is entirely at your service. What did you say the gentleman's name was, Galleygo?"

"Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, the young 'un—the old 'un clipped the night as we moored in his house."

"I hope, Sir Gervaise, I have not entirely passed from your recollection; it would grieve me sadly to think so. And my poor uncle, too; he who died of apoplexy in your presence."

"*Nullus, nulla, nullum.* That's good Latin, hey, duke? *Nullius, nullius, nullius.* My memory is excellent, gentlemen; nominative *penna*, genitive *pennæ*, and so on."

"Now, Sir Jarvy, since you're veering out your Latin, I should like to know if you can tell a 'clove-hitch' from a 'carrick-bend?'"

"That is an extraordinary question, Galleygo, to put an old seaman."

"Well, if you remembers that, why can't you just as reasonably remember your old friend, Admiral Blue?"

"Admiral of the blue! I do recollect many admirals of the blue. They ought to make me an admiral of the blue, duke; I've been a rear-admiral long enough."

"You've been an admiral of the blue once; and that's enough for any man," interrupted Galleygo, again in his positive manner; "and it isn't five minutes since you knowed your own rank as well as the Secretary of the Admiralty himself. He veers and hauls, in this fashion, on the idee, gentlemen, until he doesn't know one end of it from t'other."

"This is not uncommon with men of great age," observed the duke. "They

sometimes remember the things of their youth, while the whole of later life is a blank. I have remarked this with our venerable friend, in whose mind I think it will not be difficult, however, to revive the recollection of Admiral Bluewater, and even of yourself, Sir Wycherly. Let me make the effort, Galleygo."

"Yes, Lord Geoffrey," for so the steward always called the quondam reefer, "you does handle him more like quick-working boat than any of us; and so I'll take an hopportunity of just overhauling our old lieutenant's young 'uns, and of seeing what sort of craft he has set afloat for the next generation."

"Sir Gervaise," said the duke, leaning over the chair, "here is Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, who once served a short time with us as lieutenant; it was when you were in the *Plantagenet*. I trust you remember him, my dear sir?"

"The Plantagenets? Certainly, duke: I read them when a boy. Edwards, and Henrys, and Richards——" at the last name he stopped; the muscles of his face twitched: memory had touched a sensitive chord. But it was too faintly to produce more than a pause.

"There, now," growled Galleygo, in Agnes's face, he being just then employed in surveying her through a pair of silver spectacles that were a present from his master, "you see, he has forgotten the old *Planter;* and the next thing, he'll forget to eat his dinner. It's wicked, Sir Jarvy, to forget such a ship."

"I trust, at least, you have not forgotten Richard Bluewater?" continued the duke, "he who fell in our last action with the Comte de Vervillin?"

A gleam of intelligence shot into the rigid and wrinkled face; the eye lighted, and a painful smile struggled around the lips.

"What, Dick!" he exclaimed, in a voice stronger than that in which he had previously spoken. "Dick! hey, duke! good, excellent Dick! We were midshipmen together, my lord duke; and I loved him like a brother!"

"I knew you did! and I dare say now you can recollect the melancholy occasion of his death?"

"Is Dick dead?" asked the Admiral, with a vacant gaze.

"Lord, Lord, Sir Jarvy, you know he is, and that 'ere marvel constructure is his monerment; now you *must* remember the old *Planter*, and the County of Fairvillain; and the trashing we guv'd him?"

"Pardon me, Galleygo; there is no occasion for warmth. When I was a midshipman, warmth of expression was disapproved of by all the elder officers."

"You cause me to lose ground," said the duke, looking at the steward by the way of bidding him be silent; "is it not extraordinary, Sir Wycherly, how his mind reverts to his youth, overlooking the scenes of later life? Yes, Dick is dead, Sir Gervaise. He fell in that battle in which you were doubled on by the French—when you had *Le Foudroyant* on one side of you and *Le Pluton* on the other——"

"*I remember it!*" interrupted Sir Gervaise, in a clear, strong voice, his eye flashing with something like the fire of youth; "I remember it! *Le Foudroyant* was on our starboard beam; *Le Pluton* a little on our larboard bow—Bunting had gone aloft to look out for Bluewater—no—poor Bunting was killed——"

"Sir Wycherly Wychecombe, who afterward married Mildred Bluewater, Dick's niece," put in the baronet himself, almost as eager as the Admiral had now become; "Sir Wycherly Wyche-

combe had been aloft, but was returned to report the *Pluton* coming down."

"So he did!—God bless him! A clever youth, and he did marry Dick's niece. God bless them both. Well, sir, you're a stranger, but the story will interest you. There we lay, almost smothered in the smoke, with one two-decker at work on our starboard beam and another hammering away on the larboard bow, with our topmasts over the side, and the guns firing through the wreck."

"Aye, now you're getting it like a book!" exclaimed Galleygo, exultingly, flourishing his stick, and strutting about the little chapel; "that's just the way things was, as I knows from seeing 'em."

"I'm quite certain I'm right, Galleygo!"

"Right! your honor's righter than any log-book in the fleet. Give it to 'em, Sir Jarvy, larboard and starboard!"

"That we did—that we did!" continued the old man earnestly, becoming even grand in aspect, as he rose, always gentleman-like and graceful, but filled with native fire, "that did we! De Vervillin was on our right, and Des Prez on our left—the smoke was choking us all; Bunting—no—young Wychecombe was at my side; he said a fresh Frenchman was shoving in between us and *Le Pluton*, sir—God forbid! I thought; for we had enough of them, as it was. There she comes! See, here is her flying-jib-boom-end—and there—hey, Wychecombe?—*That's* the *old Roman*, shoving through the smoke!—*Cæsar* himself! and there stands Dick and young Geoffrey Cleveland—he was of your family, duke—there stands Dick Bluewater, between the knight-heads, waving his hat—HURRAH!—He's true, at last!—He's true, at last!—HURRAH!—HURRAH!"

The clarion tones rose like a trumpet's blast, and the cheering of the old sailor rang in the arches of the Abbey Church, causing all within to start, as if a voice spoke from the tombs. Sir Gervaise himself seemed surprised; he looked up at the vaulted roof, with a gaze half-bewildered, half-delighted. "Is this Bowldero, or Glamorgan House, my lord duke?" he asked in a whisper.

"It is neither, Admiral Oakes, but Westminster Abbey, and this is the tomb of your friend, Rear-admiral Richard Bluewater."

"Galleygo, help me to kneel," the old man added in the manner of a corrected schoolboy. "The stoutest of us all should kneel to God, in his own temple. I beg pardon, gentlemen; I wish to pray."

The Duke of Glamorgan and Sir Wycherly Wychecombe helped the Admiral to his knees, and Galleygo, as was his practice, knelt beside his master, who bowed his head on his man's shoulders. This touching spectacle brought all the others into the same humble attitude. Wycherly, Mildred, and their children, with the noble, kneeling and praying in company. One by one, the latter arose; still Galleygo and his master continued on the pavement. At length, Geoffrey Cleveland stepped forward, and raised the old man, placing him, with Wycherly's assistance, in the chair. Here he sat, with a calm smile on his aged features, his open eyes riveted seemingly on the name of his friend, perfectly dead. There had been a reaction, which suddenly stopped the current of life, at the heart.

Thus expired Sir Gervaise Oakes, full of years, and of honors; one of the bravest

and most successful of England's sea captains. He had lived his time, and supplied an instance of the insufficiency of worldly success to complete the destiny of man; having, in a degree, survived his faculties, and the consciousness of all he had done, and all he merited. As a small offset to this failing of nature, he had gained a glimmering view of one of t most striking scenes, and of much t most enduring sentiment, of a long li which God, in mercy, permitted to terminated in the act of humble submi sion to His own greatness and glory.

END OF VOLUME THREE.

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